Frommer's®

PORTABLE

Rio de Janeiro

4th Edition

by Shawn Blore & Alexandra de Vries

Here's what critics say about Frommer's:

"Amazingly easy to use. Very portable, very complete."

—Booklist

"Detailed, accurate, and easy-to-read information for all price ranges."

—Glamour Magazine

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

VISIT…

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Front cover photo: A reveler of the Viradouro samba school sings during the second night of the Carnival parades at the Sambadrome.

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About the Authors

A native of California, **Shawn Blore** has lived and worked in a half dozen countries and traveled in 40 more (but who's counting?). Now a resident of Vancouver, Shawn is an award-winning magazine writer and the author of *Vancouver: Secrets of the City* and co-author of *Frommer's Vancouver & Victoria, Frommer's Brazil,* and *Frommer's Portable Rio de Janeiro.*

Alexandra de Vries made her first journey to Brazil at the ripe old age of one month. (Alas, few of her food reviews from that trip survive.) In the years since, Alexandra has returned many times to travel, explore, and live in this amazing country. Alexandra co-writes *Frommer's Vancouver & Victoria* about her favorite place to live and *Frommer's Brazil* and *Frommer's Portable Rio de Janeiro* about her all-time favorite place to visit.

An Invitation to the Reader

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. Keep a close eye on cameras, purses, and wallets, all favorite targets of thieves and pickpockets.

Frommer's Star Ratings, Icons & Abbreviations

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system.** In country, state, and regional guides, we also rate towns and regions to help you narrow down your choices and budget your time accordingly. Hotels and restaurants are rated on a scale of zero (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). Attractions, shopping, nightlife, towns, and regions are rated according to the following scale: zero stars (recommended), one star (highly recommended), two stars (very highly recommended), and three stars (must-see).

In addition to the star-rating system, we also use **seven feature icons** that point you to the great deals, in-the-know advice, and unique experiences that separate travelers from tourists. Throughout the book, look for:

Finds	Special finds—those places only insiders know about
Fun Fact	Fun facts—details that make travelers more informed and their trips more fun
Kids	Best bets for kids and advice for the whole family
Moments	Special moments—those experiences that memories are made of
Overrated	Places or experiences not worth your time or money
Tips	Insider tips—great ways to save time and money
Value	Great values—where to get the best deals

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE American Express	DISC Discover	V Visa
DC Diners Club	MC MasterCard	

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Now that you have this guidebook to help you plan a great trip, visit our website at **www.frommers.com** for additional travel information on more than 3,600 destinations. We update features regularly to give you instant access to the most current trip-planning information available. At Frommers.com, you'll find scoops on the best airfares, lodging rates, and car rental bargains. You can even book your travel online through our reliable travel booking partners. Other popular features include:

- Online updates of our most popular guidebooks
- Vacation sweepstakes and contest giveaways
- Newsletters highlighting the hottest travel trends
- Online travel message boards with featured travel discussions

1

Planning Your Trip to Rio de Janeiro

This chapter helps you figure out how to prepare for your trip to Rio: where and when to go; how to get there; what precautions to take; and best of all, how to save money on your trip.

1 Visitor Information

The Brazilian national tourism agency, **Embratur,** has a good site at www.embratur.gov.br. The agency also has representatives overseas:

- **In the U.S.:** New York (✆ **646/378-2126;** fax 646/378-2034; e-mail: ebt.us@embratur.gov.br) or Los Angeles (✆ **310/341-8394;** e-mail: ebt.us2@embratur.gov.br).
- **In the U.K.:** 18 Greyhound Rd., London, W6.8NX (✆ **20/7396-5551;** Fax: 20/7396-5599; e-mail: ebt.uk@embratur.gov.br or assistant.ebt.uk@embratur.gov.br).

The Brazilian Embassy in the U.K. has an outstanding website including links to all the state and many city tourism websites: **www.brazil.org.uk**. Other Brazilian embassies abroad also provide good tourist information:

- **In the U.S.:** 3006 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20008 (✆ **202/238-2700;** fax 202/238-2827; www.brasilemb.org).
- **In Canada:** 450 Wilbrod St., Ottawa, ON K1N 6M8 (✆ **613/237-1090;** fax 613/237-6144; www.brasembottawa.org).
- **In the United Kingdom:** 32 Green St., London W1K 7AT (✆ **020/7399-9000;** fax 020/7399-9100; www.brazil.org.uk).
- **In Australia:** 19 Forster Crescent, Yarralumla, Canberra ACT 2600 (✆ **02/6273-2372;** fax 02/6273-2375; www.brazil.org.au).
- **In New Zealand:** 10 Brandon St., Level 9, PO Box 5432, Wellington 6001 (✆ **04/473-3516;** fax 04/473-3517; www.brazil.org.nz).

2 Entry Requirements & Customs

VISAS Nationals of the United States, Canada, and Australia require a visa to visit Brazil. British nationals (and holders of an E.U. passport) and New Zealand passport holders do not require a visa, but do need a passport valid for at least 6 months and a return ticket. A number of visa types are available; cost, processing time, and documentation requirements vary. American citizens pay US$100 for a standard single-entry tourist visa that is valid for 90 days (add another US$10 for handling fees, passport photos, and courier costs if you don't live near a consulate). Count on at least 2 weeks of processing time. For Canadians a similar visa costs C$72 and takes about the same processing time. Visas for Australians cost A$90, plus local handling fees, and again take about 2 weeks to process.

Upon arrival in Brazil, visitors will receive a 90-day entry stamp in their passport and a stamped entry card. Hang on to the card for dear life, as losing it will result in a possible fine and a certain major hassle when you leave. If necessary, the visa can be renewed once for another 90 days. Visa renewals are obtained through the local Policia Federal. This is best done in large cities where the staff has experience with tourists.

Shortly after the United States began fingerprinting Brazilian visitors, Brazil in a tit-for-tat bit of retaliation implemented its own fingerprint program for U.S. visitors. In its first few months the system caused numerous long delays; nowadays the fingerprint requirement is fulfilled with a quick and efficient digital reading of a single thumb digit.

For more information regarding visas and to obtain application details, contact the Brazilian consulate in New York (✆ **917/777-7777;** www.brazilny.org); Los Angeles (✆ **323/651-2664;** www.brazilian-consulate.org); or Miami (✆ **305/285-6200;** www.brazilmiami.org). Links will connect you to the consulate closest to you. Canadians can apply through Toronto's Brazilian consulate (✆ **416/922-2503;** www.consbrastoronto.org). In the U.K., more information is available at www.brazil.org.uk. Australians can log on to www.brazil.org.au, and in New Zealand inquiries can be made in Wellington at **04/473-3516** or check www.brazil.org.nz.

WHAT YOU CAN BRING TO BRAZIL

As a visitor you are unlikely to be scrutinized very closely by Brazilian Customs; however, there are random checks, and your luggage may be thoroughly inspected. Visitors are allowed to bring in whatever they need for personal use on their trip, including electronics

SÃO CRISTÓVÃO
Campo de São Cristóvão
Quinta da Boa Vista
Maracanã Stadium
Praça da Bandeira
Linha Vermelha
Barão de Mauá Station (Leopoldina Railway)
Novo Rio Bus Station
SANTO CRISTO
Praça Santo Cristo
SAÚDE
Central Station (Central do Brasil Railway)
Av. Presidente Vargas
Av. R. Alves
Guanabara Bay
Cobras Island
Fiscal Island
CENTRO
CASTELO
Ferry Terminal
Santos Dumont Airport
Villegagnon Island
RIO COMPRIDO
Elevado Paolo de Frontin
CIDADE NOVA
ESTÁCIO
Sambódromo
R. Itapiru
CATUMBI
LAPA
San Sebastião Cathedral
SANTA TERESA
Túnel Santa Bárbara
CATETE
GLÓRIA
Glória Marina
Aterro do Flamengo
Praia do Flamengo
FLAMENGO
R. Pinheiro Machado
Botafogo Bay
FLAMENGO BEACH
URCA BEACH
URCA
Sugar Loaf Cable Car
Morro Cara de Cão
Sugar Loaf
Guanabara Bay
LARANJEIRAS
COSME VELHO
Corcovado Railway
Corcovado
Túnel Rebouças
SILVESTRE
JARDIM BOTÂNICO
R. Jardim Botânico
Jockey Club
Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas
HUMAITÁ
R. Real Grandeza
BOTAFOGO
Morro de São João
PRAIA VERMELHA
Morro da Babilônia
Morro da Urca
LEME
Morro do Leme
LEME BEACH
FONTE DA SAUDADE
BAIRRO PEIXOTO
COPACABANA
Av. Atlântica
COPACABANA BEACH
Morro dos Cabritos
Morro do Cantagalo
POSTO 6
Forte de Copacabana
IPANEMA
IPANEMA BEACH
LEBLON
LEBLON BEACH
Av. Vieira Souto
ARPOADOR BEACH
ATLANTIC OCEAN
0 1 mi
0 1 km
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Manaus
Amazon
Belém
Natal
Recife
Salvador
BRAZIL
Brasília
São Paulo
Rio de Janeiro
0 500 mi
0 500 km

Tips Don't Leave Home without a Picture ID

Bring an alternative picture ID, like a driver's license or student ID. You are required to carry ID in Brazil, and it's sometimes requested when entering office buildings or even tourist sites. Your passport is safer in the hotel safe and not required except for official transactions.

such as a camera and laptop. If you are bringing in new electronic items you may be asked to register the item to ensure that you will take it with you when you leave. Gifts purchased abroad worth more than US$500 must be declared. Merchandise for sale or samples should also be declared upon arrival.

WHAT YOU CAN TAKE HOME

Returning **U.S. citizens** who have been away for at least 48 hours are allowed to bring back, once every 30 days, US$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. You'll be charged a flat rate of 4% duty on the next US$1,000 worth of purchases. Be sure to have receipts handy. On mailed gifts, the duty-free limit is US$200.

To avoid paying duty on foreign-made personal items you owned before your trip, bring along a bill of sale, insurance policy, jeweler's appraisal, or receipts of purchase. Or you can register items that can be readily identified by a permanently affixed serial number or marking—think laptop computers, cameras, and CD players—with Customs before you leave. Take the items to the nearest Customs office or register them with Customs at the airport from which you're departing. You'll receive, at no cost, a Certificate of Registration, which allows duty-free entry for the life of the item.

With few exceptions, you cannot bring fresh foodstuffs into the United States; canned food is allowed. For details, contact **Customs & Border Protection (CBP),** 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20229 (✆ **877/287-8667**) to request the free pamphlet *Know Before You Go.* On the Web go to **www.cbp.gov**; then click on "Traveler Information," and "Know Before You Go."

For a clear summary of **Canadian** rules, call for the booklet *I Declare,* issued by the **Canada Border Services Agency** (✆ **800/461-9999** in Canada, or 204/983-3500; www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca). Canada allows its citizens a yearly C$750 exemption, including 1 carton of cigarettes, 1 can of tobacco, 40 imperial ounces of liquor, and 50 cigars. In addition, you're allowed to mail gifts to Canada valued at less than

C$60 (one per day), provided they're unsolicited and don't contain alcohol or tobacco (write on the package "Unsolicited gift, under $60 value"). All valuables should be declared on the Y-38 form before departure from Canada, including serial numbers of valuables you already own, such as cameras. ***Note:*** The $750 exemption can only be used after an absence of 7 days.

U.K. citizens returning from **a non-E.U. country** have a Customs allowance of: 200 cigarettes; 50 cigars; 250 grams of smoking tobacco; 2 liters of still table wine; 1 liter of spirits or strong liqueurs (over 22% volume); 2 liters of fortified wine, sparkling wine, or other liqueurs; 60cc (ml) perfume; 250cc (ml) of toilet water; and £145 worth of all other goods, including gifts and souvenirs. People under 17 cannot have the tobacco or alcohol allowance. For more information, contact HM Customs & Excise at ✆ **0845/010-9000** (from outside the U.K., 020/8929-0152), or consult their website at www.hmce.gov.uk.

The duty-free allowance in **Australia** is A$400 or, for those under 18, A$200. Citizens can bring in 250 cigarettes or 250 grams of loose tobacco, and 1,125 milliliters of alcohol. If you're returning with valuables you already own, such as foreign-made cameras, you should file form B263. A helpful brochure available from Australian consulates or Customs offices is *Know Before You Go.* For more information, call the **Australian Customs Service** at ✆ **1300/363-263,** or log on to www.customs.gov.au.

The duty-free allowance for **New Zealand** is NZ$700. Citizens over 17 can bring in 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, or 250 grams of tobacco (or a mixture of all three if their combined weight doesn't exceed 250g); plus 4.5 liters of wine and beer, or 1.125 liters of liquor. New Zealand currency does not carry import or export restrictions. Fill out a certificate of export, listing the valuables you are taking out of the country; that way, you can bring them back without paying duty. Most questions are answered in a free pamphlet available at New Zealand consulates and Customs offices: *New Zealand Customs Guide for Travellers, Notice no. 4.* For more information, contact **New Zealand Customs,** The Customhouse, 17–21 Whitmore St., Box 2218, Wellington (✆ **04/473-6099** or 0800/428-786; www.customs.govt.nz).

3 Money

The official unit of currency in Brazil is the Real (pronounced ray-*all;* the plural is Reais, pronounced ray-*eyes*), which the Brazilian government introduced in 1994 in an attempt to control inflation. International money speculations around the 2002 presidential elections sent

the Real into a tailspin, arriving at a record low of nearly R$4 to the U.S. dollar. When it became clear the new leftist president Lula da Silva was actually planning to follow a quite conservative monetary policy, the Real settled back around R$3 to the U.S. dollar. Since then, the U.S. dollar has been on a steady decline to its current level around R$2 to the dollar. For travelers this means that Brazil is still affordable, though not the bargain it was in years past. We give the prices in Reais (R$), U.S. dollars (US$), and British pounds (£), accurate as of press time and calculated at the rate of R$1 = US50¢ or R$2 = US$1 and UK£1 = R$3.75. (For reference purposes, other currency equivalents are 1€= R$2.60; C$1 = R$1.85; A$1 = R$1.60; NZ$1 = R$1.40.) The U.S. dollar is likely to continue its current decline, which might tempt you to convert those dollars into Reais, but remember that the Real is also subject to a substantial yearly devaluation because of inflation. For safety reasons, the best bet is to keep your dollars in your bank account and use ATMs to withdraw cash as needed. ***Tip:*** When exchanging money, be it cash or traveler's checks, always keep the receipt. You will need it in case you want to change back any unused Reais at the end of your trip. See **www.xe.com** online for an easy currency converter.

THE U.S. DOLLAR The ongoing fall of the U.S. dollar has in some cases made it difficult to get accurate rates. Up until 2004, many businesses based their rates on the U.S. dollar. With the dollar's fall, some businesses have lowered their Real prices to keep a steady dollar price, others have increased the Real rate, and still others have switched over to accounting in euros. For U.S. travelers, it means that Brazil has gotten a little bit more expensive. When prices are listed in U.S. dollars only, it's because these companies quote their prices directly in dollars. If in doubt, ask. And though it's a bad idea to carry large wads of cash, it can be helpful to bring a small amount of U.S. cash ($10s or $20s only, no $100s) as an emergency supply in case that ATM is broken or your credit card isn't working. Even in the smallest towns people will know the exchange rate, and someone will be happy to take the U.S. dollars off your hands.

TRAVELER'S CHECKS Traveler's checks aren't a very good idea in Brazil. Most shops won't accept them, hotels give a miserable exchange rate (if they cash them), and many banks have a strange policy that they will not cash your traveler's checks unless you have an account at that branch of that bank. The Banco do Brasil is the only bank that will cash them with a minimum of hassle but will charge a US$20 service fee.

ATM NETWORKS The best way to get cash at a reasonable exchange rate is by withdrawing money from an ATM. Brazil's financial infrastructure is very sophisticated, and ATMs were common here even before they were used in western Europe. You will find them everywhere in Brazil, even in the smallest towns. The only trick is finding one that works with your card. ATMs are linked to a network that most likely includes your bank at home. **Cirrus** (✆ **800/424-7787;** www.mastercard.com) and **PLUS** (✆ **800/843-7587;** www.visa.com) are the two most popular networks in the U.S.; call or check online for ATM locations at your destination. You need to have a four-digit PIN to be able to access ATMs in Brazil. For most ATMs the limit is R$1,000 (US$500/£250) but depending on the machine these amounts may be lower.

The vast majority of travelers find they are able to use the HSBC and Banco do Brasil ATMs bearing a PLUS/Visa and Cirrus/MasterCard logo. Almost all Brazilian airports have HSBC and Banco do Brasil ATMs. However, it's not a bad idea to bring two different cards to increase your access options with other banks. (Small towns normally only have one ATM. It will be PLUS/Visa or Cirrus/MasterCard, but not always both.) Bradesco, Banco 24 Horas, and Citibank ATMs are often compatible with PLUS/Visa. If in doubt, check with your bank to find out which Brazilian bank networks are compatible with your card. Also, plan ahead to ensure that you have enough cash; for safety reasons many ATMs do not operate 24 hours. Often they will close after 10pm or only allow a small amount of cash to be withdrawn during the off-hours. Your best bets for late-night withdrawals are airports, malls, or gas stations.

Finally, make sure that during New Year's and Carnaval you get enough cash ahead of time, as machines often run out of money by the end of the holidays.

Tip: Before you leave home write down all your card numbers, expiration dates, and contact phone numbers. Leave a copy with someone you can easily reach, and e-mail a copy to yourself and save it in an account that can be accessed anywhere, like Hotmail or Yahoo!, so you have the information at your fingertips in case of loss or theft.

CREDIT CARDS The best exchange rates can be obtained through credit cards, which are accepted at most Brazilian shops and hotels and restaurants. Just keep in mind that you are sometimes able to negotiate a better discount on a room or in a store if you pay cash. The most commonly accepted cards are Visa and MasterCard.

American Express and Diners Club are also often accepted. It's a good idea to have at least two cards as some stores and restaurants may only accept one card (usually Visa or MasterCard; Diners and Amex are less common, especially in small towns). Keep in mind that many banks now assess a 1%-to-3% "transaction fee" on **all** charges you incur abroad (whether you're using the local currency or U.S. dollars). But credit cards still may be the smart way to go when you factor in things like exorbitant ATM fees and the higher exchange rates and service fees you'll pay with traveler's checks.

4 When to Go

High season in Brazil lasts from the week before Christmas until Carnaval (which falls sometime in Feb or early Mar, depending on the year). Flights and accommodations are more expensive and more likely to be full during this period. Book well ahead of time for accommodations during New Year's and Carnaval. This is the most fun time to travel—towns and resorts are bustling as many Brazilians take their summer vacations, the weather's warm, and New Year's and Carnaval are fabulously entertaining. If you want to spend New Year's in Brazil, it's best to arrive after Christmas. The 25th is really a family affair, and most restaurants and shops will be closed.

Other busy times of year include Easter week and the months of July, when schools and universities take their winter break, and August, when most Europeans visit during the summer vacation. This is probably the worst time of year to travel; prices go up significantly, and except for in the north and parts of the Northeast, the weather can be iffy and downright chilly anywhere south of São Paulo. One year in Rio, I suffered through 4 straight weeks of rain, and temperatures as low as the 40s and 50s (5°–10° Celsius) are not unheard of in the south. If you want to take advantage of the best deals and still have good weather, consider visiting Brazil in September or October. The spring weather means warm days in São Paulo, Iguaçu, and Rio, and tropical heat everywhere else; in the Amazon and the Pantanal you'll be there just before the wet season starts. As an added bonus, in Rio you'll be able to attend some of the samba school rehearsals as they get ready for Carnaval (yes, they start 4 months early). Another good period for a visit is after Carnaval (early to mid-Mar, depending on the dates) through May, when you can take advantage of low-season prices, particularly in hotels, while still enjoying good weather.

WEATHER

As Brazil lies in the Southern Hemisphere, its seasons are the exact opposite of what Northern Hemisphere residents are used to: **Summer is December through March and winter June through September.** Rio has very hot and humid summers—100°F (38°C) and 98% humidity are not uncommon. Rio winters are quite mild, with nighttime temperatures dropping as low as 66°F (19°C), and daytime temperatures climbing to the pleasant and sunny mid-80s (30°C). In the mountain resort of **Petrópolis** it often gets cold enough to see your breath (41°F/5°C) in the fall and winter.

HOLIDAYS

The following holidays are observed in Brazil: New Year's Day (Jan 1); Carnaval (Feb 21–24, 2009, Feb 13–16, 2010); Easter (Mar 21, 2008, and Apr 10, 2009); Tiradentes Day (Apr 21); Labor Day (May 1); Corpus Christi (May 22, 2008, and June 7, 2009); Independence Day (Sept 7); Our Lady of Apparition (Oct 12); All Souls' Day (Nov 2); Proclamation of the Republic (Nov 15); and Christmas Day (Dec 25). On these days banks, schools, and government institutions will be closed, and some stores may be closed as well.

Brazil's biggest holidays are New Year's and Carnaval (see "Everything You Need to Know About Carnaval" and "Reveillon: New Year's Eve in Rio," both in chapter 7). Brazilians love to travel and especially in the summer (Dec–Feb) and any long weekend, reservations are recommended.

BRAZIL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

Saint Sebastian Day. The patron saint of Rio de Janeiro is honored in this regional holiday. The highlight is a procession to the city's modern cathedral. For details, contact **Riotur** (✆ **021/2541-7522;** www.riodejaneiro-turismo.com.br) or **Alô Rio** (✆ **021/2542-8080**). January 20.

February

Carnaval. The biggest party in the world. Whether you dance in the streets, watch the thousands of participants in their elaborate costumes in the samba parade, or attend the fairy-tale Copacabana Palace ball, this is one event not to miss! For the next 3 years, the dates are as follows: February 2 to February 5, 2008; February 21 to February 24, 2009; February 13 to February 16, 2010. For details

contact **Riotur** (✆ **021/2541-7522;** www.riodejaneiro-turismo.com.br) or **Alô Rio** (✆ **021/2542-8080**). See "Everything You Need to Know About Carnaval" in chapter 7.

June

Festas Juninas. Folklore event in honor of saints Anthony, John, and Peter. Celebrated throughout Brazil, this harvest festival offers country music, bonfires, hot-air balloons, and fun fairs. In Rio contact **Riotur** or **Alô Rio** (see above). June 13 to June 14.

Bauernfest, Petrópolis. Petrópolis celebrates the German heritage of its many settlers with a week of German food, folklore, and music. Contact **Petrotur** (✆ **0800/241-516** or 024/2243-9300; www.petrotur.gov.rj.br) for details. Last weekend of June and first week of July.

September

Independence Day. This is Brazil's national holiday. Most cities hold military parades. In Rio de Janeiro this impressive event takes place around Avenida Rio Branco.

Film Festival Rio BR, Rio de Janeiro. Rio's film festival showcases Brazilian and international films. Subtitles are in Portuguese, but there is usually a good selection of international movies. In Rio, contact **Riotur** or **Alô Rio** (see above). Late September to the first week of October.

October

Free Jazz Festival, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. A 3-day jazz festival with national and international acts. In Rio contact **Riotur** or **Alô Rio** (see above). Mid- to late October.

December

Christmas Eve. Brazilians go to midnight Mass to celebrate Christmas. Mass is usually followed by a late-night supper with family. December 24. The city's official Christmas tree is on display in the center of the Lagoa.

Reveillon **(New Year's Eve).** Copacabana beach is ground zero for the event that attracts more than two million people. The 6 miles of sand are jampacked with New Year's revelers and the entertainment never stops, with concerts and performances all evening leading up to the best fireworks display in the world. December 31.

5 Health & Safety

HEALTH

Standards for hygiene and public health in Brazil are generally high. Before leaving, however, check with your doctor or with the Centers

for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) for specific advisories. Use common sense when eating on the street or in restaurants.

VACCINATIONS

Before going check your vaccinations and get booster shots for tetanus and polio if required. Children ages 3 months to 6 years may be required to show proof of polio vaccination. One vaccination that is definitely required for Brazil is **yellow fever.** Outbreaks are sometimes reported in the Amazon, the Pantanal, Brasilia, or even Minas Gerais. Make sure you get an international certificate of vaccination as Brazilian authorities sometimes require proof of vaccination for people going to or coming from an affected area. Travelers who have been to Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Peru, or Venezuela within 90 days prior to their arrival in Brazil are also required to show proof of yellow fever vaccination. Keep in mind that the vaccine takes 10 days to take effect.

DENGUE FEVER

Dengue fever is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes. It's unfortunately common in Rio de Janeiro. It's characterized by sudden onset high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain, nausea/vomiting, and rash. (The rash may not appear until 3–4 days after the fever.) Proper diagnosis requires a blood test. The illness may last up to 10 days, but complete recovery can take 2 to 4 weeks. Dengue is rarely fatal.

The risk for dengue fever is highest during periods of heat and rain, where stagnant pools of water allow mosquitoes to breed. Though it strikes most often in poorer communities, the disease has infiltrated Rio's more affluent neighborhoods. There is no vaccine for dengue fever. Symptoms can be treated with bed rest, fluids, and medications to reduce fever, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol); aspirin should be avoided. The most important precaution a traveler can take is to avoid mosquito bites in dengue-prone areas. Try to remain in well screened or air-conditioned areas; use mosquito repellents (preferably those containing DEET) on skin and clothing, and sleep with bed nets. For up-to-date information on the status of dengue fever in Brazil, consult the Centers for Disease Control website (www.cdc.gov) before departing.

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

The **tap water** in Brazil is becoming increasingly safe to drink. However, as a result of the treatment process it still doesn't taste that great and may leave your stomach upset. To be on the safe side, drink

bottled or filtered water (most Brazilians do). However, you can certainly shower, brush your teeth, or rinse an apple with the water.

If you do wind up with traveler's tummy or some other ailment (upset stomach, diarrhea, sunburn, or rash), Brazilian **pharmacies** are a wonder. Each has a licensed pharmacist who is trained to deal with small medical emergencies and can make recommendations for treatment. The service is free and medication is fairly inexpensive. If you take medication that may need replacement while in Brazil, ask your doctor to write out the active ingredients of the prescription, as many drugs are sold under different trade names in Brazil. Many drugs available by prescription only in the U.S. and Canada are available over-the-counter in Brazil.

According to recent UN statistics, Brazil has the dubious honor of ranking third in the world for total number of people with **HIV infections.** So be careful and be safe—always insist on using a condom. Though condoms are readily available in Brazilian pharmacies, it's best to bring your own; brands are more reliable in North America and Europe. To purchase condoms in Brazil ask for *camisinha* (kah-mee-*zeen*-ya), literally a small shirt; it's the commonly used term for condom.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET SICK AWAY FROM HOME

If you worry about getting sick away from home, consider purchasing **medical travel insurance.** In most cases, however, your existing health plan will provide all the coverage you need. Be sure to carry your identification card in your wallet.

Pack **prescription medications** in your carry-on luggage. Carry written prescriptions in generic, not brand-name, form, and dispense all prescription medications from their original labeled vials. Also bring along copies of your prescriptions in case you lose your pills or run out.

Contact the **International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers** (**IAMAT; ✆ 716/754-4883** or 416/652-0137). This organization offers tips on travel and health concerns in the countries you'll be visiting, and lists many local English-speaking doctors. When you're abroad, any local consulate can provide a list of area doctors who speak English (though it may be hard to find one with more than a basic knowledge of English, even in larger cities). If you do get sick, you may want to ask the concierge at your hotel to recommend a local doctor—even his or her own. This will probably yield a better recommendation than any 800-number would. If you

can't find a doctor who can help you right away, try the emergency room at the local hospital.

SAFETY

Sometime in the 1980s Brazil began developing a world reputation for violence and crime. Rio especially was seen as the sort of place where walking down the street was openly asking for a mugging. Some of this was pure sensationalism, but there was a good measure of truth as well. Brazil at the time was massively in debt to First World banks, and the combination of crippling interest payments and International Monetary Fund austerity measures left governments at all levels with no money for basics, such as street lighting and police, much less schools and hospitals.

Fortunately, in the early '90s things began to turn around. The debt crisis eased, leaving governments with some discretionary spending, and with the advent of the 1992 World Environment Conference in Rio, Brazilians realized they had a serious image problem on their hands. Governments began putting money back into basic services, starting with policing. Cops were stationed on city streets, on public beaches, and anywhere else there seemed to be a problem. At the same time governments began working on extending water and sanitation to some of the city's poorer residents in the *favelas* (shantytowns).

The decade-long expansion that followed made massive new investments in tourism infrastructure feasible. Many cities got brand-new airports. A domestic tourism boom ensued, making the protection of tourists even more of a political imperative. Nowadays, though still not perfect by any means, Rio, São Paulo, and Brazil's other big cities have bounced back to the point where they're as safe as some large international cities.

Statistically, of course, Rio and other big Brazilian cities still have very high crime rates, including high rates of violent crime. Most of that crime, however, takes place in the favelas of the far-off industrial outskirts. Brazil is a highly unequal society and the burden of crime and violence falls disproportionately (and unfairly) on the country's poor. But unless you go wandering unaccompanied into a hillside favela (not recommended), you're unlikely to be affected.

That said, common-sense rules still apply. Don't flash your valuables. Diamond rings and Rolex wristwatches are a no-no. Always have a few small bills ready in your pocket or bag to avoid pulling out your wallet in public places. Plan your sightseeing trips to the city's central

core during office hours when there are lots of people about. By all means bring your camera or videorecorder, but keep it inside a backpack or purse, and only take it out when you want to use it. Don't stroll Copacabana beach at 3am with R$1,000 in your pocket and a video camera pressed to your eyeball (a true story, alas). And though public transit is safe during the day and evening, watch for pickpockets when it gets really packed, and come nightfall, use taxis instead. Be careful at night; stick to the main streets where there is traffic and other pedestrians, and avoid dark alleys or deserted streets.

Perhaps even more importantly, *keep your wits about you in traffic!* Brazilian drivers (with a few exceptions) show no respect for pedestrians and there's no such thing as pedestrian right of way. So be very careful when crossing the street, particularly at night when drivers often run red lights. Also pay special attention when crossing one-way streets; many drivers think that the one-way rule does not apply to them. The numerous motorcycles form an additional hazard as these weave in an out of traffic at high speed, even when cars are not moving.

6 Tips for Travelers with Special Needs

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES

Travelers with disabilities will find Brazil challenging. Those who use a wheelchair to get around will find that very few places are accessible. In the large cities, increasing numbers of hotels, restaurants, and attractions are making themselves accessible. The trick lies in getting to them. Sidewalks are often uneven, ramps are usually absent, and buses and taxis are not adapted to handle a wheelchair. For some additional resources on traveling with a disability, contact **Accessable,** P.O. Box 1796, Wheat Ridge, CO 80034 (✆ **303/232-2979;** www.access-able.com). Its website has links to country-specific resources such as accessible hotels, tour operators, and other useful information. **Flying Wheels Travel** (✆ **800/535-6790;** www.flyingwheelstravel.com) offers escorted tours and cruises that emphasize sports and private tours in minivans with lifts.

FOR GAY AND LESBIAN TRAVELERS

Gay and lesbian travelers will find small but vibrant gay communities in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and some of the other big cities, more often geared toward men than women. However, public displays of affection are not common among gays and lesbians even in the cities, and in small towns and communities the level of acceptance is significantly lower—rude remarks and jokes are almost guaranteed, though physical violence is rare.

One Brazilian travel agency in Rio that specializes in tours for gay and lesbian travelers is Rio G Travel, Rua Teixeira de Melo 31, Ipanema (✆ **021/3813-0003;** www.riogtravel.com.br).

Above and Beyond Tours (✆ **800/397-2681;** www.abovebeyondtours.com) offers gay and lesbian tours worldwide and is the exclusive gay and lesbian tour operator for United Airlines. **Now, Voyager** (✆ **800/255-6951;** www.nowvoyager.com) is a San Francisco–based gay-owned and -operated travel service. For other operators and gay-friendly hotels, check the website of the **International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association** at www.iglta.com, or contact them at ✆ **800/448-8550** or 954/630-1637.

FOR SENIORS

Senior travelers can try and ask for discounts, though these are reserved for those over 60 or 65 years of age who can show Brazilian ID. Still, it's worth asking at tourist attractions if there's a discount. The phrase to use is "*Tem disconto para idosos?*"

Elderhostel (✆ **877/426-8056;** www.elderhostel.org) arranges study programs for those age 55 and over (and a spouse or companion of any age) in the U.S. and in more than 80 countries around the world. Most courses last 5 to 7 days in the U.S. (2–4 weeks abroad), and many include airfare, accommodations in university dormitories or modest inns, meals, and tuition. Many reliable agencies and organizations target the 50-plus market. **ElderTreks** (✆ **800/741-7956;** www.eldertreks.com) offers small-group tours to off-the-beaten-path or adventure-travel locations, restricted to travelers 50 and older.

FOR FAMILIES

Brazilians love kids. They will go out of their way to please children, yours and everyone else's. In fact you will see children out and about a lot more than in the U.S. or Canada, even at restaurants, bars, or late-night events. Perhaps because Brazilian children are used to going out a lot more, they seem to always behave very well in public, playing with other kids or amusing themselves, with few of the hissy fits that sometimes accompany evenings out with North American youngsters. Traveling with children is a wonderful way to meet Brazilians, as people will be receptive, friendly, and inquisitive. Hotels are very accommodating but do usually charge 10% to 25% extra for children over the age of 6 or 12 who stay in the same room as a parent or guardian. In most hotels, the age limit and the amount of extra percentage charged can be flexible and is certainly worth bargaining over. **Family Travel Network** (www.familytravelnetwork.com)

offers travel tips and reviews of family-friendly destinations, vacation deals, and thoughtful features such as "What to Do When Your Kids Are Afraid to Travel" and "Kid-Style Camping."

If a child is traveling with people other than his or her parents, or even if the child is only traveling with one of his or her parents, it is a good idea to have a notarized letter from the parents confirming permission for the child to travel. Buses and airlines sometimes demand such a letter before allowing a child to board.

For details on entry requirements for children traveling abroad, go to the U.S. State Department website (travel.state.gov).

FOR WOMEN

Machismo is alive and well in Brazil, but it's a kinder, gentler machismo than in other parts of Latin America. Single women and a few women traveling together will undoubtedly attract masculine attention. There are upsides to this. It's usually fairly harmless and can sometimes lead to some fun conversations. Brazilian men, it seems, have an insurmountable urge to flirt. Perhaps because flirting is such a way of life, they take rejection well. Indeed, the object of the exercise lies mostly in the act of flirtation itself—actually making a conquest appears to be not terribly important. Wearing a wedding ring (fake or real) will throw up only the flimsiest of barriers; it will be either completely ignored, seen as a challenge, or solicit questions such as "How married are you?" or "What kind of husband would let you out of his sight?" However, if you are not interested, just say so or walk away if necessary and that is usually enough.

The downside is that it's difficult for a woman to go out for a drink by herself and not receive attention. If you're not comfortable with this, you may want to form up a mixed group with other travelers or else stick to higher-end restaurants or hotel bars. Brazilian women in groups of two or three often link arms or hold hands as a sign that they are not interested in male attention. Use common sense to avoid situations where you may find yourself alone with someone giving you unwanted attention. At night, taking taxis is safer than walking by yourself.

TRAVELERS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

If you are allergic to nuts you should be extra careful around certain dishes. Especially those with a seafood or shrimp allergy may want to check before ordering stews from the Northeast such as *moqueca, vatapá,* and *bobó.* These dishes often have ground-up shrimp or sometimes nuts in the sauce. Also, many fish dishes come with shrimp sauce, which may not be listed on the menu. Desserts often have nuts

in them so always ask before digging in. Peanuts are *amendoim* (ah-man-doo-*een*), cashews in Portuguese are *castanha de caju* or *caju* (ka-*stan*-ya de *ka*-zhoo) for short, and Brazil nuts are known as *castanha do Pará* (ka-*stan*-ya doh pa-*rah*). The general word for nuts is *nozes* (no-*zhes*) and you can let people know that you have an allergy by saying "*Tenho alergia de . . .*" (*ten*-yo ah-lehr-*gee*-ah de . . .)

7 Getting There

BY PLANE

Most major airlines fly to Rio de Janeiro, sometimes with a connection in São Paulo. U.S. airlines that fly to Brazil include **United Airlines** (www.ual.com), **American Airlines** (www.aa.com), and **Continental Airlines** (www.continental.com). **Delta Airlines** (www.delta.com) has direct flights from its Atlanta hub. Canadian travelers can book with **Air Canada** (www.aircanada.ca), which offers a nonstop flight between Toronto and São Paulo. For those in the U.K., **British Airways** (www.britishairways.com) has several nonstop flights to Brazil.

The two big Brazilian airlines—Varig and TAM—also operate a number of international flights. Contact numbers given are for the United States and Canada unless otherwise stated. Please check the websites or contact your travel agency for details. Up until 2006, **Varig** (✆ **800/Go-VARIG;** www.varig.com) was the Brazilian airline with the most international connections to North America, Europe, Asia, and the rest of South America. However, after going through a major crisis and hovering on the edge of bankruptcy, Varig—though it survived—had to give up most of its international routes. **TAM** (✆ **888/2FLY-TAM;** www.tam.com.br) has picked up some of Varig's slack and has added more international flights to Europe and in the U.S. to Miami and New York. Relative newcomer, low budget carrier **Gol** (www.voegol.com.br) has also done well in the Varig shake-up and now offers a number of South American destinations (Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Bolivia); it is a good alternative for those traveling within South America.

BY PACKAGE TOUR

Many travel agencies offer package tours to Brazil, but few have the knowledge to effectively customize your trip or make interesting recommendations. To book a package with Brazil travel experts, contact **Brazil Nuts,** 1854 Trade Center Way, Suite 101A, Naples, FL 34109 (✆ **800/553-9959** or 914/593-0266; www.brazilnuts.com). The owners and staff are indeed nuts about Brazil and possess a vast amount of knowledge about the country and its attractions.

Depending on your needs you can book just a flight and hotels, or you can add one or more group excursions in more inaccessible places such as the Amazon. Their website is a font of information, and staff can answer any questions you may have about Brazil.

Note: Brazilian travel agents still have a firm grip on the hotel market and Brazilian hotels will usually offer their lowest rates to travel agents instead of posting them on their websites. Once you have narrowed down your hotel options, it can pay to contact an agency like Brazil Nuts to compare rates.

Another excellent resource on Brazil and South America travel in general is **South America Travel** (formerly 4StarBrazil), P.O. Box 11552, Washington, DC 20008; ✆ **800/747-4540;** www.southamericatravel.com). Similar to Brazil Nuts, South America Travel offers packages customizable to whatever level you're comfortable with. A number of interesting add-ons are available—outdoors lovers will be pleased to see some great hiking and camping options. The company has offices in Rio, Lima, and Buenos Aires.

A good travel agency to book your ticket through is **Santini Tours,** 6575 Shattuck Ave., Oakland, CA 94609 (✆ **800/769-9669** or 510/652-8600; www.santours.com). The owner as well as a number of the travel agents are Brazilian and can give you many useful suggestions on air-pass routings and answer any questions you have about your itinerary.

2

Getting to Know Rio de Janeiro

Say "Rio" and mental images explode: the glittering skimpy costumes of Carnaval; the statue of Christ, arms outspread on the mountaintop; the beach at Ipanema or Copacabana, crowded with women in minuscule bikinis; the rocky height of the Sugarloaf; or the persistent rhythm of the samba.

Fortunately in Rio there's much more beyond and behind the glitter: historic neighborhoods, compelling architecture, wildlife and nature, dining (fine and not so fine), nightspots, bookshops, cafes, museums, and enclaves of rich and poor. In Rio, the more you explore, the more there is.

1 Rio de Janeiro Essentials

ARRIVING

BY PLANE

Most major airlines fly to Rio de Janeiro, sometimes with a stop or connection in São Paulo.

Rio de Janeiro's **Antônio Carlos Jobim Airport** (✆ **021/3398-4527**), more commonly known as **Galeão Airport,** is 20km (12 miles) from downtown. The second terminal, Terminal 2, is used by Varig and its Star Alliance partners. All other airlines use Terminal 1, which is connected to Terminal 2 by a walkway.

On the third floor of Terminal 1 is a Banco do Brasil office (open daily 8am–10pm), as well as ATMs of HSBC and Banco 24 Horas, both of which use the Visa/PLUS system. The American Express office (open daily 6:30am–10pm) is located in the arrivals hall of Terminal 2.

Taxis at Galeão are a challenge. Drivers will start to hassle you the minute you step through the sliding doors. The safe bet is to buy a prepaid fare at the **Transcoopass** desk in the arrivals hall (✆ **021/2560-4888;** all major credit cards accepted). Rates range from R$58

(US$29/£16) to Flamengo, and R$60 to R$70 (US$30–US$35/£16–£19) to the beach hotels of Copacabana and Ipanema. Prepaid taxis are about 40% more expensive, but give you peace of mind; it doesn't matter if you get stuck in traffic or the driver takes the long route. On the other hand, if you know what you're doing (or can bluff), you can cut those prices significantly just by hailing a regular taxi out front of the terminal. A ride to Copacabana should cost about R$40 (US$20/£11) in average traffic conditions.

Realtur/Reitur Turismo (✆ **0800/240-850**) runs an airport bus service to the tourist areas along the beaches of Flamengo, Botafogo, Copacabana, Ipanema, Leblon, and Barra da Tijuca. From 5:30am to 11pm a bus departs every 30 minutes and takes approximately 1 hour to make the full trip from the airport to Barra. R$6 (US$3/£1.60) per person. Note that it only stops on the beach avenue. Check with your hotel to see if it's within walking distance of the bus stop.

SANTOS DUMONT AIRPORT Rio's second airport, **Santos Dumont,** Praça Senador Salgado Filho (✆ **021/3814-7070**), is located downtown. Surrounded by the Baia de Guanabara and a hop and a skip from the Sugarloaf, this scenic airport is used by **TAM, Gol,** and **Varig** for the Rio–São Paulo shuttles. The Realtur bus stops at Santos Dumont on its way to and from the international airport. The bus trip from Santos Dumont to Copacabana takes about 20 minutes. Taxis are available in front of the airport; a ride to Ipanema costs about R$30 (US$15/£8). A variety of bank machines, including a Banco do Brasil and HSBC ATM, are located at the center entrance of the airport.

BY BUS

All long-distance buses arrive at the **Novo Rio Rodoviaria,** Av. Francisco Bicalho 1, Santo Cristo (✆ **021/3213-1800;** www.novorio.com.br), located close to downtown in the old port section of the city. Going to or from the bus station it's best to use a taxi. It's not a great area to walk around with all of your belongings. Prepaid taxi vouchers are available at the booth next to the taxi stand. A ride from the bus station to Ipanema will cost about R$35 (US$18/£9.50) prepaid.

BY CRUISE SHIP

Cruise ships dock in the terminal almost opposite Praça Mauá. Downtown is an easy walk, and public transit is close by. If returning to the ship after dark, it's best to take a taxi. Praça Mauá becomes a somewhat seedy red-light district in the evening.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Riotur (✆ **021/2217-7575;** www.riodejaneiro-turismo.com.br) provides excellent information on the city of Rio de Janeiro and operates a number of offices and kiosks around town. At **Rio's international airport** (✆ **021/3398-4077**), booths in the international arrivals halls of both Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 (✆ 021/3398-2245 for both) are open daily from 6am to midnight. A third booth in the domestic arrivals hall is open from 6am to 6pm. At Rio's main bus station, **Rodoviaria Novo Rio,** there's a counter in the arrivals area, open 8am to 8pm (✆ **021/2263-4857**). The main **Riotur Information Center** (✆ **021/2541-7522**) is on Av. Princesa Isabel 183, Copacabana. Open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm, this office has the largest selection of brochures and information. Riotur also operates an information line, **Alô Rio** (✆ **021/2542-8080**), with English-speaking staff, Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm.

A must-have is Riotur's *Guia do Rio–Rio Guide* booklet, published every 3 months. Written in both English and Portuguese, it lists all tourist attractions, events, and festivals, and has many other useful phone numbers. Riotur also publishes a number of brochures specifically on outdoor sports, museums, and Carnaval. The office in Copacabana is most likely to stock all these publications.

The Rio de Janeiro state tourism agency **TurisRio** (✆ **021/2215-0011;** www.turisrio.rj.gov.br) offers information on destinations outside the city. Their office, on Rua da Ajuda 5, 6th floor, Centro, is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm.

RIO'S NEIGHBORHOODS AT A GLANCE

Geography has played a huge part in Rio's development; the city has squeezed into any available space between mountain and ocean. Rio is traditionally divided into four zones: **North (Zona Norte), Center (Centro), West (Zona Oeste)** and **South (Zona Sul).** A more detailed description of Rio's neighborhoods can be found in "Neighborhoods to Explore" in chapter 5.

ZONA NORTE Large and least interesting from a visitor's perspective, the **Zona Norte** stretches from a few blocks north of Avenida Presidente Vargas all the way to the city limits. With only a few bright exceptions—the **Maracanã** stadium, the **Quinta da Boa Vista** gardens, and **Galeão Airport**—the region is a dull swath of port, residential high-rise, industrial suburb, and favela. It's not the sort of place one should wander unaccompanied.

ZONA OESTE The Zona Oeste houses some of the poorest and some of the richest neighborhoods of the city. On one side there's Cidade de Deus—featured in the movie *City of God*—a huge low-income housing project built in the 1960s to relocate people from downtown slums out to what was then the far edge of the city. Nowadays, those with money are voluntarily relocating to the seaside condominium enclaves in **Barra da Tijuca** and **Recreio.** Most visitors will only ever visit the restaurants and malls in Barra or drive through Recreio to reach **Grumari,** a pristine beach on the city's outskirts.

CENTRO Rio's **Centro** neighborhood, the oldest part of the city, is where you'll find most of the city's notable churches, squares, monuments, and museums, as well as the modern office towers where Rio's white-collar elite earn their daily bread. Roughly speaking, Centro stretches from the **São Bento Monastery** in the north to the seaside **Monument to the Dead of World War II** in the south, and from **Praça XV** on the waterfront east to the **Sambodromo** (near Praça XI). On weekends, particularly Sundays, this area becomes very deserted, and a little too spooky to warrant a visit.

ZONA SUL–THE BAY Just to the south of Centro lies the fun and slightly bohemian hilltop neighborhood of **Santa Teresa,** and then one after the other the neighborhoods of **Glória, Catete,** and **Flamengo.** These last three were the fashionable sections of the city around the start of the 20th century, located as they were on flat ground by the edge of Guanabara Bay. Other neighborhoods in this section of the city include **Botafogo** and **Urca** (nestled beneath the Sugarloaf), and in the narrow valley behind Flamengo the two residential neighborhoods of **Laranjeiras** and **Cosme Velho.** Today they're all still pleasant and walkable—Botafogo was more commercial, but has been undergoing a residential boom over the past few years; Catete and Flamengo contain a number of historic buildings—but their bloom faded in the 1920s when engineers cut a tunnel through the mountainside to Copacabana.

ZONA SUL–THE BEACHES Then, as now, the big attraction was the ocean. Where Centro and Flamengo sit on Guanabara Bay, **Copacabana, Ipanema, São Conrado,** and **Barra de Tijuca** face the open Atlantic. The waves are bigger, the water cleaner, and the beaches more inviting. First to be developed, **Copacabana** officially covers only the lower two-thirds of the beach. The northern third (the bit closest to Urca, farthest from Ipanema) is known as **Leme.** Taking a 90-degree turn around a low headland, one comes to **Ipanema.** Like Copacabana, Ipanema is a modern neighborhood,

consisting almost exclusively of high-rise apartments from the '60s and '70s. Here, too, the same stretch of beach is considered to be two neighborhoods: Ipanema sits next to Copacabana, while the area at the far end of the beach is known as **Leblon.** Behind Ipanema there's a lagoon, the **Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas,** which is circled by a pleasant 8.5km (5.25-mile) walking/cycling trail. At its north end, farthest from the beach, stand the two quiet residential neighborhoods of **Lagoa** and **Jardim Botânico,** the latter named for the extensive botanical gardens around which the area grew.

At the far end of Ipanema stands a tall sheer double-pointed rock called the **Pedra Dois Irmãos (Two Brothers Rock).** The road carries on, winding around the cliff face to reach the tiny enclave of **São Conrado.** One of the better surfing beaches, this is also where the hang gliders like to land after swooping down from the 830m (2,700-ft.) **Pedra de Gávea.**

At night, the wide beaches are dark and mostly deserted; if you're in the mood for a moonlit stroll, stick to the brightly lit and police-patrolled pedestrian walkway that parallels the beach.

BEYOND THE BEACHES Beyond São Conrado the road goes up on stilts to sneak beneath the cliffs until reaching **Barra da Tijuca.** More like Miami Beach than Rio, Barra—as it's usually called—is a land of big streets, big malls, big cars, and big condominium towers (see "Zona Oeste," above).

2 Getting Around

Rio may seem like a large and sprawling city, but the neighborhoods in which visitors spend most of their time are very easy to get around in. From Centro south to São Conrado, the neighborhoods hang like beads on a string on the narrow strip of land between the ocean and the mountains. Most neighborhoods are thin and narrow; Copacabana in some sections is only 5 blocks deep. You can almost always see the mountains or the ocean, or both; with landmarks like that it's pretty hard to stray too far from where you want to go.

BY SUBWAY By far the easiest way to get around is by subway; in Centro and the Zona Sul it covers almost every major area of interest. (The exception is Ipanema/Leblon, which isn't slated to get subway service for another 4 or 5 years but now has a bus/subway service.) There are only two lines: Line 1 goes north from downtown—it's useful for going to the Maracanã and the Quinta da Boa Vista—while Line 2 begins at the Central Station and goes south, covering most of Centro, then swinging thorough Glória, Catete,

Flamengo, and Botafogo before ducking through the mountain to its final destination in Copacabana. Extremely quick, the trip takes about 20 minutes to move you from Centro to Copacabana (as compared to a 40–60-min. bus ride in rush hour). The system is very safe and efficient. You purchase tickets at the entrance of the stations from a ticket booth. The subway system is gradually expanding its integrated Metrô/bus service, with new air-conditioned buses feeding into the Metrô system from a number of popular destinations. Some of the more popular routes include: Metrô/Ipanema (to Ipanema; transfer at Siqueira Campos); Metrô/GáveaGávea or Barra (to Leblon and Gávea or Barra; transfer at Siqueira Campos); Metrô/Rodoviaria (to the main bus terminal; transfer at Largo do Machado); Metrô-Paula Matos (to the hillside neighborhood of Santa Teresa; transfer at Cinelândia); Metrô-Urca (to the Sugarloaf; transfer at Botafogo); and Metrô-Cosme Velho (to the Corcovado; transfer at Largo do Machado). The price is the same as a regular Metrô ticket, but you have to request your specific destination at the ticket booth; the Metrô or *metrô na superficie* tickets are different from regular subway tickets. After you use the electronic ticket to enter the subway turnstile it's returned so that you can present it on the bus at the transfer station.

A single Metrô ticket costs R$2.30 (US$1.65/£.60). Multiple tickets are available, but there's no volume discount whatsoever.

BY BUS Rio's buses follow direct, logical pathways, sticking to the main streets along much the same route you'd take if you were driving. What's more, they're fast. Once inside it's a good idea to wedge yourself in your seat; Rio drivers like to lean into the turns.

Some of the more important routes are listed with hotel or attraction listings, but you'll likely find many more that suit your needs. From Centro to Copacabana alone there are more than 30 different buses. Figuring out which to take is straightforward. The route number and final destination are displayed in big letters on the front of the bus. Smaller signs displayed inside the front window (usually below and to the left of the driver) and posted on the side of the bus list the intermediate stops. A bus going from Praça XV in Centro out to Copacabana, for example, would show COPACABANA as the final destination, and on the smaller sign list intermediate destinations such as CINELÂNDIA, GLÓRIA, LARGO DO MACHADO (in Flamengo), and RIO SUL (the big mall in Botafogo). ***Tip:*** If you're going from Ipanema or Copacabana all the way to Centro (or vice versa), look for a bus that says VIA ATERRO in its smaller window sign. These

buses get on the waterfront boulevard in Botafogo and don't stop until they reach downtown.

Buses only stop if someone wants to board. If you see your bus coming, wave your hand at the driver. Have your bus money ready—R$2 to R$3.50 (US$1–US$1.75/£.55–£.95)—as you will go through a turnstile right away. You pay for each ride; there are no transfers. Buses are safe during the day; just watch for pickpockets when it gets busy. In the evening, when fewer passengers ride, it is better to take a taxi.

BY TAXI

Taxis are plentiful and relatively inexpensive. They're the perfect way to reach those out-of-the-way places and the best way to get around in the evening. Regular taxis can be hailed anywhere on the street. You will also find taxi stands throughout the city. A ride from Copacabana to Praça XV in Centro costs about R$22 (US$11/£6), a ride from the main bus station to Leblon, R$35 (US$18/£9.50) in traffic. Radio taxis are about 20% more expensive, often work with a set fee per destination, and can be contacted by phone; try **Coopertramo** (✆ **021/2560-2022**) or **Transcoopass** (✆ **021/2560-4888**). Most hotels work with radio taxis so if you don't want to pay extra just walk to the corner and hail your own regular taxi. Radio taxis are said to be more reliable (and they have air-conditioning as well), but we've never had a problem with any regular taxi.

BY VAN

In the last few years the city has seen an explosion of additional bus services provided by Volkswagen vans and micro-buses. Although vans were at first illegal, the city eventually legalized them. Fares range from R$2 to R$4.50 (US$1–US$2.25/£.55–£1.20) and quality ranges from downright scary to clean, modern vehicles. Those that circulate along the Zona Sul waterfront and farther out to Barra da Tijuca are generally quick and efficient. Vans can be hailed anywhere and will let you off anywhere on their route.

BY FERRY

Rio has a number of ferries operated by **Barcas SA** (✆ **021/2533-7524**), departing from Praça XV downtown. The busiest ferry route is the one connecting downtown Rio with the city of Niterói across the bay—also reached by car and bus by crossing the 14km (8½-mile) bridge. The service to Niterói runs 24 hours a day, with hourly service between midnight and 5am. The cheapest ferry (R$2/US$1/£.55) is the regular one, taking about 25 minutes to cross. The

catamaran and *aerobarco,* a hydrofoil, cross the same route in less than 10 minutes and cost R$4 (US$2/£1.05). A popular ferry for tourists as well as Cariocas on the weekend is the route to Paquetá, a large car-free island in the Baia da Guanabara. The ferries to Paquetá depart Rio at 5:15am, 7:10am, 10:30am, 1:30pm, 3:30pm, 4:35pm, and 7pm; the fare is R$4.50 (US$2.25/£1.20).

BY CAR

A car is not required for exploring Rio; a combination of public transit (in the daytime and evening) and taxis (late at night) gets you pretty much anywhere in the city for very little money. But for information about renting a car, see the entry for "Car Rentals" under "Fast Facts: Rio de Janeiro," below.

The truth is, driving in Rio is not for the weak of heart. Traffic is hectic, street patterns confusing, drivers just a few shades shy of courteous, and parking next to nonexistent. Better to get used to the city traffic as a pedestrian first and rent a car only if you're going out to destinations such as Petrópolis and the historic towns of the Minas Gerais region (for more, see chapter 8).

SPECIAL DRIVING RULES The rule is, *there are no rules.* Okay, maybe we're exaggerating. Traffic has improved immensely in recent years since police began using photo-radars. People now wear seat belts and stop at red lights during the day. However, Cariocas still drive aggressively. Lane dividers are either absent or ignored. Any space larger than 4 inches between your car and the one in front will be instantly occupied by another driver. Later at night red lights become optional. Be careful when approaching intersections.

FAST FACTS: Rio de Janeiro

American Express In The Copacabana Palace Hotel at Av. Atlântica 1702, loja 1, Copacabana (✆ **021/2548-2148**); open Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm. At the international airport, in the arrivals hall of Terminal 2 (✆ **0800/7020-777**); open daily from 6:30am to 10:30pm.

Area Code The area code for Rio de Janeiro is **021.**

Banks & Currency Exchange Banco do Brasil has branches at Rua Joana Angelica, Ipanema (✆ 021/2522-1442), Av. N.S. de Copacabana 594, Copacabana (✆ 021/2548-8992), and international airport, Terminal 1, third floor (✆ 021/3398-3652); all

have 24-hour ATMs. For currency exchange try Bank Boston, Av. Rio Branco 110, Centro (✆ 021/2508-2700); Citibank, Rua da Assambleia 100, Centro (✆ 021/2291-1232); and Imatur, Rua Visconde de Pirajá 281, loja A, Ipanema (✆ 021/2219-4205).

Business Hours Stores are usually open from 9am to 7pm weekdays, 9am to 2pm on Saturdays. Shopping centers are open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 8pm most places, though in Rio de Janeiro they often stay open until 10pm. Banks are open Monday through Friday either from 10am to 4pm or from 9am to 3pm.

Camera Repair **Foto Cantarino,** Largo de São Francisco de Paulo 23, 1st floor (✆ **021/2221-4918;** Metrô: Uruguaiana), is one of the best repair shops in town. It's open Monday to Friday 9am to 4:30pm.

Car Rentals At Antônio Carlos Jobim International Airport there are **Hertz** (✆ 021/3398-4421), **Interlocadora** (✆ 021/3398-3181), and **Unidas** (✆ 021/3398-3452). At Santos Dumont Airport there are **Hertz** (✆ 021/2262-0612), **Interlocadora** (✆ 021/2240-0754), and **Unidas** (✆ 021/2240-6715). In Copacabana there are **Hertz,** Av. Princesa Isabel 500 (✆ 021/2275-7440), and **Localiza Rent a Car,** Av. Princesa Isabel 150 (✆ 021/2275-3340). Rates start at R$100 (US$50/£27) per day for a compact car with air-conditioning. Insurance adds R$30 (US$15/£8) per day.

Consulates *Australia,* Av. Presidente Wilson 231, Suite 23, Centro (✆ **021/3824-4624**). *Canada,* Av. Atlântica 1130, 5th floor, Copacabana (✆ **21/2543-3004**). *U.S.,* Av. Presidente Wilson 147, Centro (✆ **021/3823-2000**). *Great Britain,* Praia do Flamengo 284, 2nd floor, Flamengo (✆ **021/2555-9600**).

Dentist **Sorriclin,** Rua Visconde de Pirajá 207/209, Ipanema (✆ **021/2522-1220**).

Doctor **Medtur,** Av. N.S. de Copacabana 647, Suite 85, Copacabana (✆ **021/2235-3339**). Ask your hotel for further recommendations, as they may have an arrangement with a doctor nearby.

Electricity 110V. Some hotels have plugs for both 110 and 220 volts.

Emergencies Police ✆ **190;** fire and ambulance ✆ **193;** tourist police, Av. Afrânio de Melo Franco 159, Leblon (contact line ✆ **021/3399-7170**).

Hospitals Public hospital emergency rooms can be found at Miguel Couto, Rua Bartolemeu Mitre 1108, Leblon (✆ **021/3111-3800**) or at Souza Aguiar, Praça da Republica 111, Centro (✆ **021/3111-2629**). Private emergency rooms can be found at the Cardio Trauma Ipanema, Rua Farme de Amoedo 86, Ipanema (✆ **021/2525-1900**) and at the city's best hospital, Copa D'or, Rua Figueiredo de Magalhães 875, Copacabana (✆ **021/2545-3600**).

Internet Access Internet cafes or Lan Houses can be found everywhere. A **Telerede Internet Cafe,** Rua N.S. de Copacabana 209, Copacabana (✆ **021/2275-3148;** Metrô: Arcoverde), charges R$5 (US$2.25/£1.35) for an hour. It's open daily 8am to midnight.

Laundry & Dry Cleaning **Lavanderia Ipanema,** Rua Farme de Amoedo 55, Ipanema (✆ **021/2267-2377**), is open Monday to Saturday 8am to 8pm. A medium load, washing and drying, costs R$20 (US$10/£5.40). For an extra R$6 (US$3/£1.60) the attendants wash, fold, and pack your laundry. **Lavakilo,** Rua Almirante Gonçalves 50, loja A, Copacabana (✆ **021/2521-5089**), is open Monday to Friday 7:30am to 7:30pm and Saturday from 8am to 5pm. Charged by the kilo, a 1-kilogram load costs R$8 (US$4/£2.15) for washing and drying. Dry cleaning starts at R$6.50 (US$3.25/£1.75) per item.

Mail Look for the yellow-and-blue sign saying CORREIOS. **Downtown:** Rua Primeira de Março 64, Centro (✆ **021/2503-8331**); **Copacabana:** Av. N.S. de Copacabana 540, Copacabana (✆ **021/2503-8398**); **Ipanema:** Rua Visconde de Pirajá 452, Ipanema (✆ **021/2563-8568**). The international airport also has a post office, open 24 hours.

Maps **Riotur** (Av. Princesa Isabel 183, Copacabana) has helpful small maps of the main tourist areas.

Newspapers Your best bet for international papers is the newsstands along Visconde de Pirajá in Ipanema, and the bookstore Letras e Expressões, Visconde de Pirajá 276, Ipanema (✆ **021/2521-6110**).

Pharmacies In Ipanema, **City Farma,** Rua Gomes Carneiro 144 A (✆ **021/2247-3000** or 021/2523-2020), is open 24 hours. They also deliver. All credit cards accepted. Also open 24 hours is **Drogaria Pacheco,** Av. N.S. de Copacabana 115, Copacabana (✆ **021/2295-7555**).

Safety Though Rio once had an unsavory reputation for street violence, in the early 1990s governments began to pour money back into policing and there have since been significant improvements. That said, there are still several things to keep in mind. It's a bad idea to wander unaccompanied into any of the favelas (shantytowns) found in and around the city; this is where most of the crime in Rio takes place. In the ritzy areas like the Zona Sul, favelas cling to steep hillsides and ridge tops. It's also best to avoid the city center (Centro) on weekends, particularly Sundays. Centro on the weekends remains mostly empty, and more than a little eerie. Avoid the beaches at night, which are dark and mostly deserted (stick to the brightly lit and police-patrolled pedestrian walkway that borders the beach). At night, traveling by taxi is recommended—don't rely on public transportation. Finally, as in any large metropolitan area, it's wise to observe common-sense precautions: Don't flash jewelry and large amounts of cash, and stick to well-lit and well-traveled thoroughfares.

Taxes The city of Rio charges a 5% accommodations tax, collected by the hotel operators. This amount will be added to your bill. Hotels may also add a 10% service charge to your bill. There are no taxes on retail items.

Telephones International GSM cellphones usually work in Brazil. Charges can be high—usually US$1 (£.50) to US$1.50 (£.75) per minute. A better option is to buy a local SIM card, which gives you a local Brazilian number and allows you to pay local Brazilian rates (about R$.70/US30¢ per minute for local calls, R$1.40/US60¢ for long distance).

Public phones in Brazil can be found everywhere and are called *orelhões.* To use these phones you need a phone card, for sale at all newsstands. Ask for a *cartão telefonico.* Dialing a local number is straightforward; just dial the number without the area code. However, for long-distance dialing, telephone numbers are normally listed with a three-digit prefix, followed by the area code, followed by the seven- or eight-digit number (for example, 0XX-21-5555-5555). Since phones were deregulated, a number of very competitive companies have sprung up. The two digits that fill in the XX are the number of the appropriate service provider (in Portuguese this is called the *prestadora*). The only code that works in all of Brazil is the one for *Embratel*—21 (which also happens to be

the area code of Rio). So, if you were dialing long distance to a number in Rio, you would dial 0-21 (selecting Embratel as your provider), 21 (Rio's area code), and 5555-5555 (the number). Dialing long distance to a number in São Paulo, you'd dial 0-21-11-5555-5555.

To phone internationally, you dial 0 + 21 + the country code + area code + phone number. International collect calls can be requested by dialing **000-111,** or automatically by dialing 90 + 21 + country code + area code + phone number.

To dial from the U.S. or Canada to Brazil, dial 011+55 (the country code) and then the area code without the 0 (specifically, 21 for Rio, 11 for São Paulo).

Time Zones Rio de Janeiro is 3 hours behind GMT. During daylight saving Rio's time difference changes to 2 hours behind GMT.

Tipping A 10% service charge is automatically included on most restaurant and hotel bills, and you are not expected to tip on top of this amount. If service has been particularly bad you can request to have the 10% removed from your bill. Taxi drivers do not get tipped; just round up the amount to facilitate change. Hairdressers and beauticians usually receive a 10% tip. Bellboys get tipped R$1 (US40¢/£.20) per bag. Room service usually includes the 10% service charge on the bill.

Visa Renewal If you need to extend your visa, go to the **Policia Federal,** Av. Venezuela 2, Centro (just behind the Praça Mauá), ✆ **021/3213-1400,** open Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm. The fee is R$69 (US$35/£19), and you may need to show evidence of sufficient funds for your stay and a return ticket.

Weather Rio's summers, from December to March, are hot and humid. Temperatures rise routinely above 105°F (40°C). In the spring and fall, the temperatures stay between the high 70s and low 90s (high 20s to low 30s Celsius). In the winter, June to August, it can cool off at night to as low as 59°F (15°C), but during the day temperatures range from the 70s to the mid-80s (20s Celsius). Most rain tends to fall in the summer in short intense tropical showers, or in the winter in longer drizzly showers.

3

Where to Stay

Although Rio boasts a number of hotels, there's surprisingly little variety: There are few pousadas or fancy bed-and-breakfasts, not even many heritage buildings. The vast majority of hotels are in modern high-rises, many built in the '60s and '70s, most with a similar layout and design. The difference between hotels thus lies in the location, the room size, the amenities, and, of course, the view. The best rooms always face the ocean and are priced accordingly. Note that if you choose not to stay in a prime oceanview room, you often get much better value by staying at the best room in a less expensive hotel away from the beach than by paying for a cheaper room in an expensive beachfront hotel.

The best-known hotel area is **Copacabana,** with easy access via Metrô back to the city core, and a good selection of inexpensive hotels close to the beach. One beach over from Copacabana, **Ipanema** and **Leblon** have become increasingly popular over the past decade and now boast better nightlife and trendier shopping than Copa. The only real disadvantage to staying here is the lack of a subway line, but there are lots and lots of buses.

Farther out in **Barra da Tijuca** is where you will find the city's newest and most modern hotels. Hotels out here are close to the convention center and the 2007 Pan-American Games site, but it's a 30- to 60-minute cab ride from Ipanema and Copacabana and the people and street life that make Rio so fascinating.

Back toward downtown you find the lively and more historic neighborhoods **Glória, Catete, Santa Teresa,** and **Flamengo.** Located a 15-minute subway ride from both downtown and Copacabana, they offer excellent budget options as well as luxury accommodations rivaling The Copacabana Palace but at a much better price.

In the lobby, hotels always list the rack rates on a sign behind the desk, but you can expect to pay 50% to 80% of this amount, depending on the season, the staff person, and your bargaining skills. Prices are quite flexible; always negotiate. Sometimes just paying with cash can result in a 10% to 15% discount.

Tips Where *Not* to Stay in Rio

The only neighborhood to avoid hotel-wise is downtown Rio. The Praça Mauá hotels may look like a bargain, but this area transforms into a red-light district at night when the office workers have gone home.

The only time of year when it's difficult to get a deal is during **high season,** from the week before Christmas through the end of Carnaval. The city overflows with visitors from all over the world, not to mention Argentines and Brazilians taking their summer holidays. New Year's and Carnaval are the tourism industry's cash cows, and during this time most hotels will only accept reservations for set package deals—usually a 2- or 3-night minimum stay for New Year's and a 5-night minimum stay for Carnaval—at highly inflated prices. Shop around in advance if you're going to be in Rio during these times; packages (*especially* the less expensive ones) sell out by October or November. Most hotels now have websites and will provide quick information upon request.

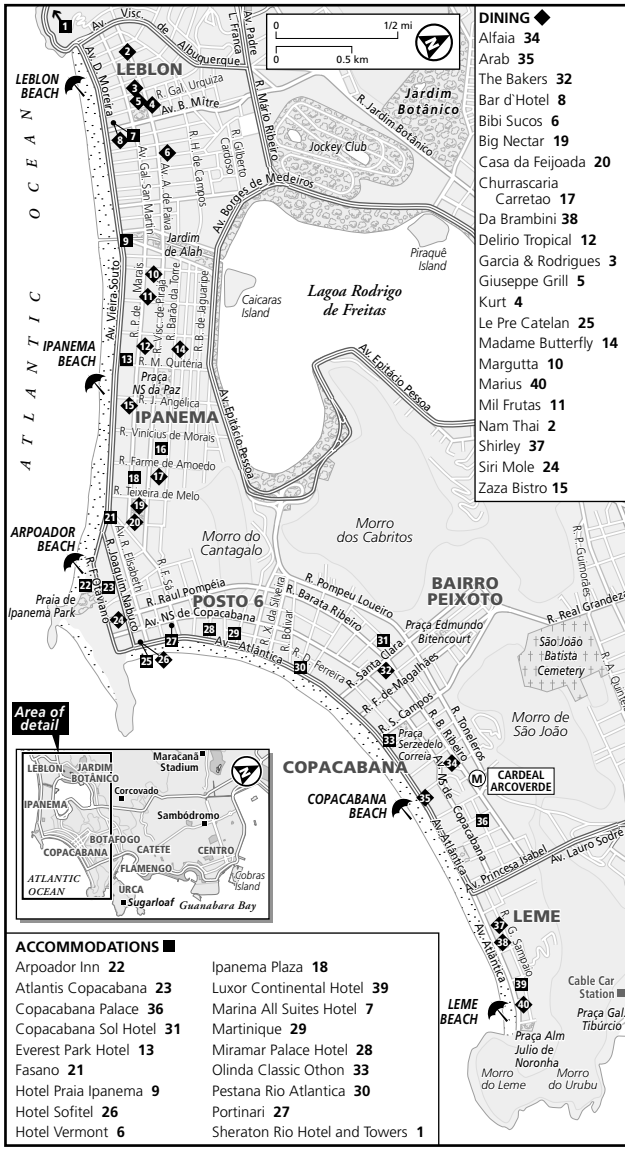
Make sure to ask about taxes that will be added to your bill. Most hotels charge a 10% service tax, a 5% city tax, and, if they are a member of the Rio Convention and Visitor's Bureau, a tourist tax of R$3 to R$9 (US$1.25–US$3.75/£.60–£1.90) per day.

Breakfast *(café de manha)* at Brazilian hotels is almost always included in the room price and at most places includes a nice buffet-style spread including bread, meats, cheeses, fruits, eggs (sometimes), and *café com leite,* strong coffee served with hot milk. In recent years a few of the more expensive hotels have taken to charging for *café de manha;* if this is the case it's noted in the review.

1 São Conrado/Barra da Tijuca

The only reason to stay beyond Leblon is if you prefer your hotel with a large leisure area such as tennis courts and large swimming pools. Close to the convention center and the site of the 2007 Pan American Games, hotels in Barra usually have huge recreational areas. The drawback is that you're anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour from Ipanema and Copacabana (depending on traffic) and thus isolated from the people and street life that make Rio so fascinating.

Where to Stay & Dine in São Conrado, Leblon, Ipanema, Copacabana & Leme



DINING
Alfaia **34**
Arab **35**
The Bakers **32**
Bar d'Hotel **8**
Bibi Sucos **6**
Big Nectar **19**
Casa da Feijoada **20**
Churrascaria Carretao **17**
Da Brambini **38**
Delirio Tropical **12**
Garcia & Rodrigues **3**
Giuseppe Grill **5**
Kurt **4**
Le Pre Catelan **25**
Madame Butterfly **14**
Margutta **10**
Marius **40**
Mil Frutas **11**
Nam Thai **2**
Shirley **37**
Siri Mole **24**
Zaza Bistro **15**

ACCOMMODATIONS
Arpoador Inn **22**
Atlantis Copacabana **23**
Copacabana Palace **36**
Copacabana Sol Hotel **31**
Everest Park Hotel **13**
Fasano **21**
Hotel Praia Ipanema **9**
Hotel Sofitel **26**
Hotel Vermont **6**
Ipanema Plaza **18**
Luxor Continental Hotel **39**
Marina All Suites Hotel **7**
Martinique **29**
Miramar Palace Hotel **28**
Olinda Classic Othon **33**
Pestana Rio Atlantica **30**
Portinari **27**
Sheraton Rio Hotel and Towers **1**

VERY EXPENSIVE

Sheraton Barra Hotel & Suites ★★★ *Kids* Located on Barra's premier stretch of waterfront, the Sheraton offers the most modern and luxurious accommodations in Rio. All 292 rooms face the ocean and all have balconies. Classic rooms are located on floors 1 to 5. Preferred rooms take up floors 6 to 15. All rooms, regardless of floor, come with a large desk, a sitting area with a 29-inch TV, and a wet bar. Beds are indulgent, with a firm king-size mattress, cozy fleece blanket, plump duvet, and five cushy pillows. What really sets this hotel apart is the leisure area. There are two swimming pools and Jacuzzi tubs set in a beautifully landscaped garden, a state-of-the-art fitness center, squash courts, a fully equipped business center, and a trendy lounge. Guests also have access to the 27-hole Itangá golf course. There's a free shuttle to the Barra Shopping.

Av. Lúcio Costa 3150 (aka Av. Sernambetiba), Barra da Tijuca, 22630-011. ✆ **021/3139-8000.** Fax 021/3139-8085. www.sheraton-barra.com.br. 292 units. R$460 (US$230/£124) classic room double; R$635 (US$318/£171) preferred room double; R$675 (US$337/£182) junior suite double. Extra person R$145 (US$72/£39). Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 2113. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; 1 outdoor heated adult pool and 1 outdoor heated children's pool; health club; sauna; children's playground; concierge; tour desk; courtesy shuttle to Barra Shopping; business center; salon; room service; massage; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, kitchenette, minibar, fridge, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Sheraton Rio Hotel & Towers ★★★ *Kids* The Sheraton is the only large luxury hotel with a fabulous leisure area that is still relatively close to the Zona Sul. You are only a 30-minute walk from Leblon or a 10-minute taxi ride from Ipanema. It is also the place where Rio's societal divisions will stare you right in the face, or rather, into your room. Located directly on its own beautiful pocket beach, the Sheraton sits in the shadow of a hillside favela. Guests in the north-facing rooms awake to the calls of roosters roaming round the small brick shacks across the road. As sharp as the contrast may seem, there is a friendly mingling of tourists and locals on the beach (which is kept very safe by hotel security). The hotel itself is the ultimate in luxury, featuring three large swimming pools in a beautiful parklike setting, beachfront access, and sweeping ocean views. The rooms are spacious and very bright. All have verandas with a partial or full ocean view, and the interiors have recently been upgraded with new light fixtures, large desks, and dual phone lines. The location is suitable for children, and the hotel staff offer lots of activities to keep little ones busy.

Av. Niemeyer 121, Rio de Janeiro 22450-220. ✆ **021/2274-1122.** Fax 021/2239-5643. www.sheraton-rio.com. 559 units. R$330–R$450 (US$165–US$225/£89–£121) standard double; R$400–R$560 (US$200–US$280/£108–£151) oceanview double; R$550–R$760 (US$275–US$380/£149–£205) junior suite double. Check the Internet for specials. Extra person add 25%. Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. Breakfast not included. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. No public transit. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; disco; 3 outdoor heated pools; tennis courts (extra charge); health club (extra charge); sauna; children's center; game room; concierge; tour desk; car rental; courtesy shuttle service; business center; shopping arcade; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry; dry cleaning; nonsmoking floors; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Windsor Barra ★★ *Kids* The newest kid on the block (opened Sept 2005) is all modern design on the outside. Inside, rooms feature classic, elegant furnishings and color schemes that are easy on the eye—lots of beiges and moss greens. The superior apartments are located on lower floors and have side views of the ocean. The best rooms are the spacious deluxe corner rooms on the higher floors—these have both side and full ocean views, plus a Jacuzzi tub. The best view in the house is reserved for the leisure area; the swimming pools and bar boast a sweeping 360-degree view of Barra Beach and surroundings.

Av. Sernambetiba 2630 (aka Av. Lúcio Costa), Barra da Tijuca, 22620-170. ✆ **021/2195-5000.** Fax 021/2195-5050. www.windsorhotels.com. 338 units. R$440 (US$220/£119) double superior; R$660 (US$330/£178) double deluxe. Extra person 25%. Children 6 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; 1 outdoor heated adult pool and 1 outdoor heated children's pool; health club; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; salon; room service; massage; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, kitchenette, minibar, fridge, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

2 Ipanema/Leblon

One beach over from Copacabana, **Ipanema** and **Leblon** have become increasingly popular over the past decade and now boast better nightlife and trendier shopping than Copa. Leblon, in particular, is fast becoming Rio's prime neighborhood for fine dining. There are both affordable hotel options and outstanding luxury accommodations. The only drawback? It's a bit far from downtown and lacks a subway connection. The bus ride into Centro is normally about 40 minutes, but during weekday rush hours it can take up to an hour.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Fasano ★★★ The famous *enfant terrible* of the design world Phillippe Starck is known for his chairs and hotel lobbies and other high-end hotel bits the world over; this was his first ever opportunity

Tips Know About the Beach Entrance

Maybe it's to keep sand from tracking in the lobby, or maybe it's to avoid having the Speedo-clad squeezing into an elevator full of suits. For whatever reason, many beachfront hotels have a separate entrance and elevator for those going to the beach. Normally marked ENTRADA DE BANHISTAS or ENTRADA DE SERVIÇO, these elevators lead to the hotel service entrance where—as a bonus for following the local etiquette—you can pick up a beach towel, chair, and umbrella. Returning from the beach you enter the same side entrance and drop the stuff off again.

to design a complete hotel. Top to bottom, inside and out, it's all Starck. The result does not disappoint. The rooftop pool, in particular, is a thing of beauty, a low square pond of chiseled white marble with an infinite edge that seems to flow out the parapet and join with sand and sea. Inside, rooms feature the same design sense: The queen-size beds are set off at an oblique angle to the room's basic rectangle. There's a small desk area and kind of wavy kitschy wall mirrors, plus a bathroom with rainfall showers and a wide, square white basin, a motif carried on in the rooftop pool. The deluxe oceanview rooms are a much more comfortable size, with the same bed design, plus a small sitting area and a balcony featuring a pair of lovely '50s-modern chairs, made from tropical hardwood instead of teak. The oceanview suites are larger still, with a retractable silk curtain to separate off a comfortable little sitting area, which comes with its own separate bathroom facilities. The quality of everything in all rooms—bedding, bathroom products, bathrobes—is all top-notch. And if you can't afford the room rate, it's still worth coming in for a fancy cocktail in the lobby lounge or big white restaurant bar, to admire the high design and watch the beautiful people at play.

Av. Vieira Souto 88, Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro, 22420-000 RJ. ✆ **021/3202-4000.** Fax 021/3202-4010. www.fasano.com.br. 91 units. R$945 (US$470/£255) superior double; R$1,440 (US$720/£389) deluxe oceanview double; R$2,500 (US$1,225/£675) oceanview suite. Extra bed R$150 (US$75/£40). Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. Inquire about seasonal discounts. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking. Bus: 415. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; rooftop pool; small spa; well-equipped fitness center; sauna; concierge; business center; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry; dry cleaning; nonsmoking floors. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Marina All Suites Hotel ★★★ *Finds* Design with a capital D. The Marina All Suites is the brainchild of a consortium of local

architects and decorators who bought, gutted, and redecorated all the rooms, in the process reducing the original layout of six rooms per floor to a very spacious three. All are so precociously modern they positively squeak, with original pieces of art and a style unique to each unit. The two-bedroom Suite Diamante must be the most beautiful suite in Rio and is said to be Gisele Bündchen's favorite room when in town. The "basic" suites (basic being an understatement) are studio apartments. The design suites have a separate bedroom. All feature an American kitchen (microwave, fridge, and wet bar), ample desk space and sitting areas, spacious bathrooms, and luxurious furnishings, making this truly one of Rio's most outstanding hotels. The restaurant Bar d'Hotel is one of the hipper nightspots in Rio (p. 68).

Av. Delfim Moreira 696, Leblon, Rio de Janeiro, 22441-000 RJ. ✆ **021/2172-1100.** Fax 021/2294-1644. www.marinaallsuites.com.br. 38 units (some with showers only). R$700–R$930 (US$350–US$465/£189–£251) basic suite; R$980–R$1,200 (US$490–US$600/£265–£324) design suite; R$1,900 (US$950/£513) Suite Diamante. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 474. **Amenities:** Restaurant; pool; excellent gym; sauna; game room; concierge; business center; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, kitchen, minibar, fridge, microwave, toaster and coffeemaker, hair dryer, electronic safe.

EXPENSIVE

Everest Park Hotel ★★ Less luxurious than its sister hotel the Everest Rio, the Everest Park is also cheaper, making it a reasonable option for business travelers looking to economize. All 25 units have Internet access, dataports, and a large workspace upon which to spread out papers. The rooms themselves are also spacious, with a small hallway area at the entrance opening up to two twin beds. (Reserve a double bed when booking and staff will join the twins together to make a comfortable double.) Recent renovations have added new carpets, and the bathrooms have also been redone and now feature bathtubs, large bright mirrors, and hair dryers. True, there's no business center, but guests can access the one at the Everest Rio Hotel just half a block away around the corner.

Rua Maria Quiteria 19, Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro, 22410-040 RJ. ✆ **0800/244-485** or 021/2525-2200. www.everest.com.br. 25 units. R$260 (US$130/£70) double. Up to 25% discount in low season and weekends. AE, MC, V. No parking. Bus: 474. **Amenities:** Room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, safe.

Hotel Praia Ipanema ★★★ Straddling the border between Ipanema and Leblon, the Praia Ipanema offers luxury beachfront accommodations at a less than luxury price. The hotel is within walking distance of Lagoa, the upscale shopping and restaurants of

the Zona Sul, and the restaurants and bars of Leblon. All 105 units offer balconies and ocean views, a full one in the case of the 55 deluxe rooms and a partial (from the side) view for the 46 superior rooms (which, it should be noted, are actually larger than the deluxe rooms). The best rooms begin at the 10th floor and carry upward, as the views of sand and sea get ever more spectacular. Three-day weekend specials (Fri–Sun) often include drinks, lunch or dinner, and a late checkout for the same price as 2 regular nights.

Av. Vieira Souto 706, Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro, 22420-000 RJ. ✆ **021/2540-4949.** Fax 021/2239-6889. www.praiaipanema.com. 105 units. R$500 (US$250/£135) superior double; R$595 (US$298/£161) deluxe view double. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Bus: 474 or 404. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; rooftop outdoor pool; small gym; tour desk; business center; room service; laundry service and dry cleaning; beach service. *In room:* A/C, TV/VCR, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Ipanema Plaza ★★★ The Ipanema Plaza is located just 1 block from Ipanema beach. The hotel's modern and sleek design looks fabulous and the attention to detail carries over into the rooms. Furnished in beige tones and cherrywood, the rooms are quite spacious, particularly the deluxe rooms. A number of them come with a large balcony, and all double beds are king-size; twin beds are much larger than the average Brazilian single bed. If you're splurging, the master suites are gorgeous and have a separate sitting room adjacent to the bedroom. The hotel recently inaugurated the Ipanema floor. All rooms on this floor have ocean views and come with high-end extras such as a 29-inch flatscreen TV. The hotel is close to Rio's upscale gay neighborhood, and has a reputation for being very gay-friendly.

Rua Farme de Amoedo 34, Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro, 22420-020 RJ. ✆ **021/3687-2000.** Fax 021/3687-2001. www.ipanemaplazahotel.com. 135 units. R$400 (US$200/£108) superior double; R$490 (US$245/£132) deluxe double; R$610 (US$305/£165) Ipanema floor double. Extra person 25%. Children under 10 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 474 or 404. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; rooftop outdoor pool; small gym; tour desk; business center; room service; laundry service and dry cleaning; beach service. *In room:* A/C, TV/VCR/DVD, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Arpoador Inn ★ *Value* The only budget-priced oceanfront hotel in Ipanema, the Arpoador Inn enjoys a privileged location on a quiet stretch of beach popular with the surf crowd, and just around the corner from Copacabana. Even better, the beach in front of the hotel is closed to cars and is therefore pleasantly quiet. The deluxe rooms all face the ocean. The furniture is simple but the rooms are bright and spotless. Obtaining these does require booking ahead; if they're

full, the superior rooms, which look out over the street behind the beach, make an acceptable alternative. The only rooms to avoid are the standard ones, which are very small, dark, and look into an interior wall.

Rua Francisco Otaviano 177, Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro, 22080-040 RJ. ✆ **021/2523-0060.** Fax 021/2511-5094. www.arpoadorinn.com.br. 50 units (showers only). R$170 (US$85/£46) standard double; R$220 (US$110/£59) street-view superior double; R$350 (US$175/£95) deluxe oceanview double. Extra person R$90 (US$45/£24). Children 6 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Bus: 474. **Amenities:** Restaurant; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, safe.

3 Copacabana

Copacabana may not be the upscale neighborhood that it once was but there are still advantages to staying in this part of the city. Prices are lower than in Ipanema and you will find all the services a tourist is likely to need. Also, Copacabana is strategically located; it's only a 10- to 15-minute cab ride to Ipanema or to downtown, and there's excellent bus service and a Metrô line, which makes it easy and convenient to get downtown or to places farther out, such as the Sambodromo or the Maracanã soccer stadium.

The best hotels are on the Avenida Atlântica and some of its cross streets. Avoid the hectic Nossa Senhora de Copacabana Avenue and Rua Barata Ribeiro.

The drawback to Copacabana is that you share the hood with seniors, lots and lots of other tourists, vendors, hawkers, hustlers and, in certain sections, street hookers and (mostly foreign) johns (it's particularly bad around Av. Prado Junior and in front of the Help discothèque). With some common precautions the neighborhood is just as safe as Ipanema, but you do get that extra local flavor. We find it quite colorful and a part of what makes Copa unique. Leme, at the far end of Copa, could be the perfect alternative for those who want to have all the benefits of being close to Copa without sinking in the midst of it.

VERY EXPENSIVE

The Copacabana Palace ★★ The spot where beachfront luxury in Rio all began, The Copacabana Palace is the place to splurge. True, things have gotten more crowded since this opulent vision first appeared on a lonely stretch of sand, but the 84-year-old Palace still maintains its Jazz Age charm. Taking full advantage, however, requires approaching things with Gatsbyesque confidence. Take, for example,

the city-view rooms. Or rather, don't take them. Though cheaper, they offer not a drop of ocean view. Deluxe beach-view rooms give you that coveted ocean view but to get value for money at the Palace it's really a case of go big or go home, and there's nothing bigger than the penthouse suites. Elegant and tastefully decorated, these spacious one-bedroom suites have their own private veranda overlooking Copacabana beach. Just as stylish and almost as spacious are the pool-side suites, which also feature a partial ocean view. Now that is the kind of life we were intended to live. The hotel recently added a high-end spa to its services. Note that the rates listed here are rack rates. Check the website or contact a travel agency for discounts and package deals.

Av. Atlântica 1702, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, 22021-001 RJ. ✆ **0800/211-533** or 021/2548-7070. Fax 021/2235-7330. www.copacabanapalace.orient-express.com. 226 units. R$1,010 (US$510/£273) deluxe city-view double; R$1,380 (US$690/£373) deluxe oceanview double; R$1,830 (US$915/£494) junior suite double; 1-bedroom suite R$2,480 (US$1,240/£670). Seasonal discounts available, special weekend packages, 2 nights for the price of 1, including breakfast and Sat Feijoada lunch. Extra person about 25%. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Metrô: Arcoverde. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; large outdoor pool; rooftop tennis courts; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; tour desk; car rental; business center; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry; dry cleaning; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, kitchen, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Sofitel ★★★ One of Rio's most elegant hotels, the Sofitel is also one of the most cleverly designed: the U-shaped structure guarantees a large number of the 388 rooms a full or partial view of the shimmering ocean. Located on the edge of Copacabana directly opposite the Copacabana Fort, this flagship of the French Sofitel chain also offers superb service and a clean modern look to match. All rooms have balconies, soundproof windows, and electronic safes big enough to hold a laptop. Superior rooms are elegantly decorated with brand-new furnishings and fixtures, and come with a partial ocean view. Deluxe rooms differ only in offering a guaranteed full ocean view. For sunbathing there's a complimentary beach service on Copacabana beach itself, or else a choice of two swimming pools, one to catch the morning sun and the other for the afternoon rays. The pool area, the hotel bar, and the outstanding Le Pré-Catelan restaurant (see review of Le Pré-Catelan on p. 61) have all been renovated recently. Breakfast not included (R$50/US$25/£14).

Av. Atlântica 4240, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, 22070-002 RJ. ✆ **0800/241-232** or 021/2525-1232. Fax 021/2525-1200. www.accorhotels.com.br. 388 units. R$468 (US$234/£126) superior double; R$675 (US$338/£182) deluxe double; R$900

(US$450/£243) junior suite double. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 474. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants (see Le Pré-Catelan on p. 61); bar; 2 pools; health club; sauna; concierge; tour desk; car rental; business center; shopping arcade; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms and floors; executive-level rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

EXPENSIVE

Miramar Palace Hotel ★★ The flagship of the excellent Windsor chain, the Miramar offers luxury beachfront accommodations at a reasonable rate. The hotel sits on a corner, offering rooms with both full and partial ocean views. The recently renovated rooms have modern blond-wood furniture and splashes of cheerful tropical colors. Standard rooms are spacious and located on the lower floors (4–13); you can still see the ocean albeit from the side. Superior rooms on the 14th and 15th floors have better views but give up some space in exchange for a veranda. The deluxe rooms all have gorgeous views of Copacabana. The best rooms in the house are the suites. All are corner units, where the light pours in through large windows on both sides. The spacious bedrooms have elegant marble bathrooms and a jetted tub with a view of Copacabana beach. The hotel restaurant hosts an excellent *feijoada* lunch on Saturdays.

Av. Atlântica 3668, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, 22070-001 RJ. ✆ **021/2195-6200.** Fax 021/2521-3294. www.windsorhoteis.com. 156 units (many with bathtubs). R$230 (US$115/£62) standard double; R$320 (US$160/£86) superior double; R$350 (US$175/£95) deluxe double. Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 128 or 474. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; rooftop pool; exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; room service; laundry; nonsmoking floors. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Olinda Classic Othon ★★ *Value* A lovely heritage building, the Olinda has finally gotten a much-needed makeover. The lobby has been transformed into an elegant salon with a restaurant and piano bar. All the common spaces have Wi-Fi Internet access. Elevators have been upgraded to the 21st century and all the rooms have been renovated. The dark colonial furniture has been tossed, replaced by lighter woods, soothing pale colors, and stylish furniture. All rooms now feature a modern phone system, electronic keys, a flatscreen TV and broadband Internet service. The superior rooms, which face the back of the building, are a bit smaller and have twin beds or a queen-size bed. The much nicer deluxe oceanview rooms have a king-size bed. Some rooms also have a balcony. The spacious suites are worth the upgrade; these all face the ocean and have a veranda and a separate sitting room.

Av. Atlântica 2230, Copacabana, 22041-001 RJ. ✆/fax **021/2545-9091.** www.hoteis-othon.com.br. 102 units (showers only). R$205 (US$102/£55) double standard; R$285 (US$142/£77) double deluxe; R$330 (US$165/£89) double suite. Extra person add 40%. Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Metrô: Arcoverde. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, safe.

Pestana Rio Atlântica ★★★ Always one of the nicest hotels on the Avenida Atlântica, the Pestana looks brand-new thanks to a recent overhaul. The best rooms in the house, without doubt, are the *Oceanica* suites. These large rooms offer ocean views, large balconies, and come elegantly furnished with dark wooden furniture and splashes of yellow and beige. They are among the best in Copa, if you can afford the splurge. The standard and superior rooms are more plainly furnished and have a side view. Standard rooms look out over the buildings adjacent to the hotel. Superior rooms (on the 10th floor and higher) have a partial ocean view. There's a good fitness center, and the rooftop pool area offers a massage room, sauna, and Jacuzzi. Breakfast costs R$36 (US$18/£10).

Av. Atlântica 2964, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, 22070-000 RJ. ✆ **021/2548-6332.** Fax 021/2255-6410. www.pestana.com. 216 units. Standard double R$432 (US$216/£117); superior R$478 (US$239/£129); suite oceanica R$730–R$1,070 (US$365–US$535/£197–£289). Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking. Metrô: Arcoverde. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for people w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Portinari ★★ The only thing that keeps Rio's premier design hotel from getting three stars is its location just off the busy Avenida N.S de Copacabana; it lacks the sex appeal of a beach address. Inside, the hotel is fabulous. A team of 10 well-known Brazilian designers gave each floor a unique look. Styles range from classic-romantic with elegant furniture and pale colors to the environmentally friendly rooms, furnished using only recycled wood and natural fabrics. Our favorite rooms are the ones designed by Marcia Muller. Perfect for couples, the design is sensuous with gorgeous indirect lighting and luxurious white linens. The shower is separated by a glass wall from the bedroom and allows you to see silhouettes in the bathroom. All rooms come with queen-size or twin beds with 200-thread linen and goose-down pillows, 21-inch flatscreen TVs, and high-speed Internet. The spacious suites feature large bathrooms (some with sauna or tub) and DVD players. Check the website for excellent specials.

Rua Francisco de Sá 17, Copacabana, 22080-010 RJ. ✆ **021/3222-8800.** Fax 021/3222-8803. www.hotelportinari.com.br. 66 units. R$270 (US$135/£73) double; R$325–R$380 (US$163–US$180/£88–£103) suite. Extra person add 25%. Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking R$30 (US$13/£7.50) per day. Bus: 415. **Amenities:** Restaurant; coffee shop; bar; rooftop pool; small workout room; sauna; concierge; room service; laundry; dry cleaning; 2 nonsmoking floors; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

MODERATE

Atlantis Copacabana Hotel ★ Located between Ipanema and Copacabana on a quiet residential street, the Atlantis Copacabana Hotel is perfect for those who like to keep their options open. Either beach is within minutes from your hotel, and shopping and restaurants are easily accessible as well. The hotel offers basic accommodations; all 87 rooms are standard with only a small variation in size and layout; rooms ending in 07 and 08 (for example, nos. 107 and 108) are slightly larger. Rooms above the eighth floor that look out the back offer a view of Arpoador and Ipanema beach.

Rua Bulhões de Carvalho 61, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, RJ 22081-000. ✆ **021/2521-1142.** Fax 021/2287-8896. www.atlantishotel.com.br. 87 units (showers only). R$180–R$240 (US$90–US$120/£49–£65) double. Extra person R$50 (US$25/£14). Children 5 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Bus: 128 or 474. **Amenities:** Rooftop pool; sauna; tour desk; concierge; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, safe.

Copacabana Sol Hotel ★★ *Finds* If you don't mind being off the waterfront, the Copacabana Sol offers good value and pleasant accommodations only 4 blocks from Copacabana beach. Much of the money obviously went into the lobby; with its colorful furniture and modern art, it borders on funky. Rooms were not neglected, however, nor were the suites. The latter, in particular, are a great deal. Spacious and cool with granite floors, the suites have a comfortable sitting room and gorgeous bathrooms with Jacuzzi tubs and separate showers. The superior and standard rooms have very small bathrooms with showers only. Superior rooms overlook the street and have balconies and a small sitting area. As the Rua Santa Clara is not too noisy (especially at night), these rooms are preferable to the alley-facing standard rooms (which also lack balconies).

Rua Santa Clara 141, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, 22041-010 RJ. ✆ **0800/254-477** or 021/2549-4577. Fax 021/2255-0744. www.copacabanasolhotel.com.br. 70 units. R$165–R$190 (US$83–US$95/£45–£51) standard and superior double; R$250 (US$125/£68) suite double. Extra person R$40 (US$20/£11). Children 5 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 128 or 474. **Amenities:**

Restaurant; tour desk; concierge; business center; room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, safe.

Luxor Continental Hotel ★★★ *Finds* Located in a quiet residential neighborhood just off Copacabana, the Luxor offers outstanding value. Rates seldom top R$250 (US$125/£67) and online bookings can even be less than that. For that you get services that are worthy of a deluxe hotel: room service and business center, high-speed wireless Internet, a large fitness room, and rooftop pool. The rooms themselves are comfortable albeit a tad on the plain side with a double bed or twins (make sure you state your preference when booking), a small table and chairs, and counter. Bathrooms have showers only but come with hair dryers. The Luxor is set 1 block from Leme Beach, which is really the continuation of Copacabana beach. However, Leme is a cul-de-sac so traffic is much lighter than in Copa and with fewer hotels it is also not as touristy. Leme's big advantage is its strategic location; both downtown and Ipanema are only a 15-minute cab ride away and Copacabana is a 10-minute stroll. To make the most of the view, reserve a room on the 16th floor or higher that faces the ocean. Nonsmokers will be happy to know that the entire hotel is nonsmoking.

Rua Gustavo Sampaio 320, Leme, Rio de Janeiro, 22010-010 RJ. ✆ **021/2546-1070.** Fax 021/2541-1946. www.luxorhoteis.com.br. 275 units (showers only). R$218 (US$109/£59) standard double; R$240 (US$120/£65) superior double; R$272 (US$136/£73) deluxe double. Extra person 25% extra. Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Bus: 472. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; 24-hr. business center; room service; laundry; nonsmoking hotel; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Martinique ★ *Value* The Martinique is the newest budget option of the Windsor chain. Located just around the corner from the Miramar, the hotel is only half a block off the Avenida Atlântica and offers excellent value. The hotel consists of two buildings side-by-side that were gutted and then joined together. This makes for some mazelike hallways and some small rooms, but on the plus side, the hotel is brand-new and the rates are affordable. The best rooms are the superior ones that look out over the street. The ones closest to the corner (rooms that end in 13 such as nos. 413 and 513) even have a partial ocean view. The standard rooms look out over the back lots of the adjacent buildings. However, all are pleasantly furnished in bright colors and have comfortable beds. Nice details at this price

level include the hair dryer, makeup mirror, electronic safe, and the high-speed Internet in each room. Most rooms are a tad on the small side and accommodate two people only. If you require a room for three, reserve ahead of time. The hotel even has a rooftop pool and sun deck but with the beach only 300 feet away you'd have to be pretty lazy not to make it out the door.

Rua Sá Ferreira 30, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, 22071-100 RJ. ✆ **021/2195-5200.** Fax 021/2195-5222. www.windsorhoteis.com. 117 units. R$190–R$220 (US$95–US$110/£51–£59) double. Extra person 25%. Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 415. **Amenities:** Restaurant; rooftop pool; cardio equipment; concierge; room service; nonsmoking floors; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

4 Flamengo/Catete/Glória/Santa Teresa

These older neighborhoods just south of downtown offer a range of excellent accommodations. Staying here will allow you to experience the real Rio, where tourists are a minority. These neighborhoods are also architecturally very interesting and offer many glimpses into Rio's fascinating history. The chief drawback to the area is its distance from the ocean beaches.

EXPENSIVE

VERY EXPENSIVE

Mama Ruisa ★★ *Finds* For a very different hotel experience, consider spending a few nights in the quaint hilltop neighborhood of Santa Teresa. French owner Jean Michel Ruis opened up a lovely bed-and-breakfast in an almost 100-year-old mansion. Beautifully decorated, each of the seven suites is differently furnished and styled with elegant furniture and all the modern trimmings such as wireless Internet, cable TV, and air-conditioning. The Josephine Baker room, Jean Cocteau room, and Carmen Miranda room are junior suites and in addition to being a little bit bigger they also feature a private balcony with a view of the Gloria Outeiro church and Guanabara bay. Breakfast is served on your balcony out on the sun deck. The small inn also has a lovely pool and garden with a gazebo perfect for spending a lazy afternoon reading a book. The Largo dos Guimarães, Santa Teresa's main square and "restaurant row," is only a 5-minute walk away.

Rua Santa Cristina 132, Santa Teresa, Rio de Janeiro, 20241-250 RJ. ✆ **021/2242-1281.** Fax 021/2210-0631. www.mamaruisa.com. 7 units. R$500 (US$250/£135) double; R$700 (US$350/£189) junior suite double. Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Outdoor pool; tour desk;

Santa Teresa Bed & Breakfast Network ✪✪

Quite a change from most of Rio de Janeiro's high-rise accommodations, the **Santa Teresa Cama e Café B&B network** (✆ **021/2224-5689** or 021/2221-7635; www.camaecafe.com.br) offers spectacular rooms in one of the city's most charming neighborhoods. The participating homes are often quite spectacular and situated in some of Santa Teresa's finest locations. The staff does a great job matching you according to your price preference, language skills, and interests. Hosts include a variety of resident artists and chefs, as well as people who have an interest in Brazilian music, art, and history. Houses range from century-old mansions to Art Deco villas to spacious apartments with fab views. Prices range from R$90 to R$180 (US$45–US$90/£24–£49), depending on the luxuriousness of your digs. But for as little as R$120 (US$60/£32) you can book yourself into a fabulous house with great views, swimming pool, and garden. The drawback to Santa Teresa is its relative isolation. In the evening you need to rely on taxis to get around. However, in the daytime you can grab a bus and be at the Metrô or downtown in 20 minutes. Santa Teresa in itself is worth a day or two of exploration. It's a perfect retreat, away from the beach.

limited room service; laundry; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer.

EXPENSIVE

Hotel Florida ✪✪ *Finds* A gem of a hotel, the Florida is popular with business travelers from São Paulo who know a good deal when they see it: On top of a reasonable room rate the Florida offers free parking, free local calls, and free Internet access. Built in the 1940s, the hotel doesn't suffer from the modern "small room" syndrome, and the spacious and pleasant rooms offer either granite floors or new carpeting. The standard rooms overlook the rear or the side of the building and come with showers only. Both the superior and deluxe rooms offer views and have bathrooms with whirlpool tubs. The nicest rooms are those overlooking the lush gardens of the Palácio do Catete, Brazil's former presidential palace. The deluxe rooms are the most spacious, with a large entrance hall, king-size bed, sitting area, and desk. The hotel offers excellent discounts on weekends when its regular business travelers stay home.

Where to Stay & Dine in Flamengo, Glória, Catete, Urca, Botafogo & Santa Teresa

Rua Ferreira Viana 81, Flamengo, Rio de Janeiro, 22210-040 RJ. ✆ **021/2195-6800.** Fax 021/2285-5777. www.windsorhoteis.com. 312 units. R$250 (US$125/£67) standard double; R$275 (US$137/£74) superior double; R$320 (US$160/£86) deluxe double. Extra person add 25%. Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Metrô: Catete. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor rooftop pool; weight room; sauna; concierge; tour desk; business center; room service; laundry; dry cleaning; nonsmoking floors. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Glória ★★ The grande dame of Rio hotels, the Glória was built in 1922 (a year before The Copacabana Palace) to provide luxury accommodations for dignitaries attending Brazil's centennial celebrations. An annex was added in the '70s in the same style, making the 630-room Glória one of Rio's largest hotels. Yet somehow it doesn't feel huge and impersonal. If you can, reserve a deluxe room—the views of the bay and the Sugarloaf are well worth it. Those rolling in cash can consider the junior suites—located on the corners—each of which features a large living room furnished with lovely antiques, and a spacious master bedroom with big windows overlooking some of Rio's finest scenery. A little bit smaller than the deluxe rooms, the pleasant superior and standard rooms offer garden views. All the rooms in the Annex have been completely renovated and look great, though they are not overly large. But no matter which room you get, you can indulge in the outstanding amenities: lovely gardens, the best sun deck in the city with views of the bay, marina, and Sugarloaf, two large heated swimming pools, and an outstanding fitness center.

Rua do Russel 632, Glória, Rio de Janeiro, 22210 RJ. ✆ **0800/213-077** or 021/2555-7272. Fax 021/2555-7283. www.hotelgloriario.com.br. 630 units (standard rooms in Annex have showers only). Standard rooms R$285–R$360 (US$142–US$180/£77–£97) double; superior and deluxe rooms R$320–R$460 (US$160–US$234/£86–£124) double. Extra person R$80 (US$40/£22). Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Metrô: Glória. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; 2 outdoor heated pools; health club; sauna; concierge; tour desk; car rental; business center; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry; dry cleaning; nonsmoking floors. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

Solar de Santa ★★ Solar de Santa offers a wonderful home away from home. This beautiful mansion in Santa Teresa offers comfortable accommodations in a lovely setting. The main house features two apartments with a private bathroom and veranda overlooking the garden and Santa Teresa. The two other rooms don't have a private bathroom and are therefore only rented out to people traveling together who don't mind sharing a bathroom, for example a group

of friends or a couple with children. There is also a bungalow with a very private deluxe room, a king-size bed, and large bathroom set back from the house. The large common dining room and living room, which open up to a large veranda and deck, are beautifully decorated with high-end crafts made by local artists. Because of the limited number of rooms, the Solar offers a very affordable option of renting the entire house, accommodating up to 12 people! This means that in addition to having the run of the house, you can also use the kitchen. Perfect for a few families traveling together.

Ladeira do Meireles 32, Santa Teresa, Rio de Janeiro, 22210 RJ. ✆ **021/2221-2117.** Fax 021/2221-6679. www.solardesanta.com. 5 units (3 suites and 2 rooms without bathroom; these latter ones are only rented with the suites). Suite R$400 (US$200/£108) double; room without private bathroom R$165–R$220 (US$82–US$110/£45–£59) double; bungalow R$560 (US$280/£151). Entire house (up to 13 people) R$1,600 (US$800/£432). Children 10 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, V. **Amenities:** Tiny outdoor pool; massage; babysitting; TV lounge; laundry. *In room:* A/C, Fan, Wi-Fi.

MODERATE

Casa Aurea The Casa Aurea is only a short walk up the road from the main square in Santa Teresa and offers very affordable accommodations. Popular with younger travelers and backpackers, the pousada offers rooms with shared bathrooms or private rooms with an en suite bathroom. The rooms are simply furnished but very clean and pleasant with high ceilings and large windows with wooden shutters. The large house has a gorgeous garden and patio, outdoor reading lounge, sitting room, and barbecue area, and is decorated with lovely artwork by some of the well-known artists from Santa Teresa.

Rua Áurea 80, Santa Teresa, Rio de Janeiro, 20240-210 RJ. ✆ **021/2242-5830.** www.casaaurea.com.br. 60 units. R$150 (US$75/£40) private bathroom double; R$120 (US$60/£32) shared bathroom double. Children 7 and under stay free in parent's room. No credit cards. No parking. **Amenities:** Laundry; Internet. *In room:* Fan.

4

Where to Dine

Cariocas love to eat out. Better yet, they love to linger over their meals. Waiters in Rio would never dream of coming by to ask you to "settle up" so they can go off shift. So take your time. Dawdle. Savor. Enjoy.

Rio offers an endless variety of places to eat. There are the *choperias,* the place for cold beer and casual munchies. Slightly more upscale are the botequins, many of which are open to the early hours. There are hundreds of food kiosks, each with its own specialty, be it barbecued prawns, Bahian finger food, or vegetarian sandwiches. And on top of all that, there's a wide variety of restaurants in all neighborhoods, ranging from inexpensive to very expensive, from simple sandwiches to delicious steaks, from fresh sushi to the complicated stews and sauces of Brazil's Northeast. There's no excuse for going hungry in Rio.

Portions often serve two people, especially in more casual restaurants. Always ask or you may well end up with an extraordinary amount of food. In Portuguese ask, *"Serve para dois?"* (pronounced *sir*-vay p'ra doysh—"does it serve two?").

The standard Brazilian menu comes close to what some restaurants label as international cuisine: pasta, seafood, beef, and chicken. Except in Brazil, these are served with a local or regional twist. The pasta may be stuffed with *catupiry* cheese and *abóbora* (a kind of pumpkin); the chicken could have *maracujá* (passion fruit) sauce. Brazilian beef comes from cows just like in the rest of the world, but in Brazil the cows are open-range and grass-fed, making for a very lean beef that comes in uniquely Brazilian cuts such as *picanha* (tender rump steak), *fraldinha* (bottom sirloin), or *alcatra* (top sirloin). And of course, for side dishes no Brazilian meal is complete without *farofa* and rice or black beans.

Most restaurants are open from around 11am until 4pm and then again from 7pm until midnight or later. There are also quite a few establishments that will stay open all day, especially on the weekends when people leave the beach at 4pm to go eat lunch. Sunday is often the busiest day for lunch as extended families get together for a meal.

Moments Don't Shy Away from Street Food

When it comes to street vendors and food, you read a lot of strange things in travel guides. Never eat meat. Don't touch fruit. Don't eat anything at all. Only drinks. In cans. Insist on ice cubes made from bottled water. Sheesh!

Rio is *not* Rangoon, nor the fetid fever swamps of 19th-century Benin. Yes, tap water is best avoided. It won't kill you; it's just so chlorine-saturated that it tastes like *eau de* swimming pool. Some of the best meals I've had in Brazil have been purchased from a street vendor. One night in Rio, on the Rua Ouvidor, we came across a man and his charcoal brazier, selling skewers of fresh-grilled prawns, lightly salted and doused with lemon. We bought two skewers, which lasted about 40 seconds . . . so we went back for four more . . . and then another four. The moral? Eating from street vendors is fine, as long as you take precautions. Does the vendor look clean and healthy? Is the food stored in a cooler? Are Brazilians queuing up? If so, odds are the food's good, and whatever supplies he has in his cooler haven't been hanging around long enough to go bad. So eat, enjoy, and don't have a cow. Or rather, *do,* if that's what they're selling.

Many restaurants close Sunday evening. The exception to these hours is in Rio's downtown, where restaurants cater to the office crowd; only a few of them remain open evenings and weekends.

These days you will find more and more **kilo** (*quilo* in Portuguese) restaurants. The food is laid out in a large buffet, and at the better ones there's a grill at the back serving freshly cooked steaks, chicken, and sausage. Kilos aren't all-you-can-eat. Rather, you pay by weight (but the quality is *much* better than at American lunch buffets). If you're not familiar with Brazilian food, it's a great way to see all the dishes laid out in front of you; you can try as little or as much as you like. Even better, there are often a variety of salads and vegetables that are often hard to come by elsewhere in Brazil. The system works as follows: When you enter the restaurant, you're given a piece of paper on which all your orders are recorded. Don't lose this slip or you'll have to pay a ridiculously high penalty. You grab a plate, wander by the buffet and grill, filling up on whatever catches your

eye (all items have the same per-kilogram cost, which is usually advertised both outside and inside the restaurant), and then take the plate to the scale to be weighed. The weigher records the charges on your bill, after which you find a table. Normally a waiter will then come by and take your drink order, adding these charges to your tally. On your way out the cashier sums it all up.

Tip: Small cups of strong dark coffee (called *cafezinhos*) are usually served free by the cashier or exit. Look for a thermos and a stack of little plastic cups.

1 Centro

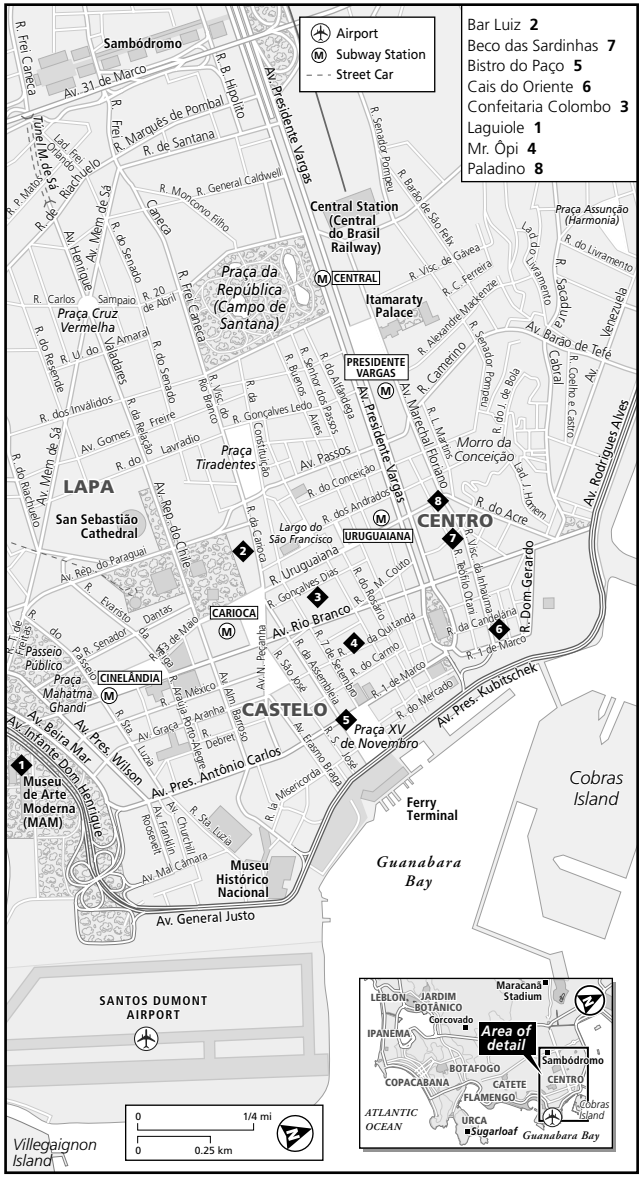
EXPENSIVE

Cais do Oriente ★★★ ASIAN/MEDITERRANEAN The area behind the Arco de Teles is better known for the bustling outdoor bars that pack the alleyways behind the Rua Primeiro de Março, but Cais do Oriente is anything but casual. This former 19th-century warehouse has undergone major renovations and emerged as a stunning venue for a restaurant and bar, complete with opulent antique furniture, large mirrors, and elegant furnishings. The menu is all over the map, literally, covering the Orient as well as the Mediterranean. You'll find Asian dishes such as sweet-and-sour duck with fried rice tossed with cashews and pistachio nuts or a Thai squid dish with oyster sauce and a green papaya salad. The Mediterranean dishes include prawn risotto with basil and grilled salmon served with a Gorgonzola-and-ricotta-stuffed pancake and the beautiful fresh figs with goat cheese and Parma ham. The bar upstairs is a great venue for live music on Fridays or Saturdays (cover R$20–R$35/US$10–US$18/£5.50–£9.50).

Rua Visconde de Itaboraí 8, Centro. ✆ **021/2233-2531.** www.caisdooriente.com.br. Main courses R$28–R$50 (US$14–US$25/£7.50–£14). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–midnight; Sun–Mon noon–4pm. In the evenings taxi recommended. Bus: 119. Get off one stop past the Praça XV.

Confeitaria Colombo ★★★ BRAZILIAN/DESSERT Tucked away in a narrow side street off the busy Avenida Rio Branco, this stunning Victorian tearoom hasn't changed much since it opened in 1894. The spacious room is divided into three sections. Two large counters flanking either side of the entrance serve up sweets and savory snacks with coffee or other refreshments for those in too much of a hurry to sit down. The remainder of the ground floor is taken up by an elegant tearoom, where a variety of teas, sandwiches, salads, and sweets are served on fine china underneath a '20s stained-glass window.

Where to Dine in Rio Centro



The upstairs room is reserved for full lunches—on Saturdays the *feijoada* (black beans and pork stew) is worth a trip downtown.

Rua Gonçalves Dias 32, Centro. ✆ **021/2232-2300.** www.confeitariacolombo.com.br. Tearoom snacks and lunches R$10–R$25 (US$5–US$13/£2.70–£6.75); buffet lunch or Sat Feijoada buffet R$45 (US$23/£12) including dessert. Tea service R$8–R$20 (US$4–US$10/£2–£5.40). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 8:30am–7pm; Sat 9am–5pm. Metrô: Carioca.

Laguiole ★★★ BRAZILIAN On the second floor of the Modern Art Museum, the Laguiole restaurant fits in with its surroundings. The long, rectangular dining lounge is clean and modern, with clean metallic finishings. The food is modern and Brazilian, with a subtle touch of French. Some of our favorites include the large grilled prawns with mango chutney, or duck breast with wild cherries. Fish lovers will enjoy the sole filet, served on a bed of spinach with a carrot soufflé. As for choosing some wine to go with lunch, you may want to ask for help from sommelier—the wine list is one of the largest in the country, over 600 labels and 8,000 bottles!

Inside the MAM, Av. Infante D. Henrique 80, Aterro do Flamengo. ✆ **021/2517-3129.** Main courses R$36–R$50 (US$18–US$25/£10–£14). DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–5pm. Taxi recommended.

MODERATE

Bar Luiz *Finds* GERMAN One of Rio's most beloved little restaurants, Bar Luiz has been around since 1887. Originally called Bar Adolf (after the owner), it moved to its current location on the Rua da Carioca in 1927. Then, as now, the bar was a popular hangout for intellectuals and politicians, which may have been why the owner was so quick to change the name in 1942. Name aside, the bar hasn't changed much over the years. The long room is simply furnished with wooden tables, chairs, and a lovely tile floor. The walls are plainly adorned with old photographs of Rio, while overhead big Casablanca fans whirl to keep the heat down. Even the menu has stayed much the same, in honor of the first German owner. Cariocas flock here to gorge themselves on generous portions of sausage and sauerkraut, Wiener schnitzel, Kassler ham, and potato salad. (Health craze, what health craze?) The draft beer—lager and dark—is pumped through a 2,400-foot-long refrigerated hose before finding its way into your glass. *Prosit!*

Rua da Carioca 39, Centro. ✆ **021/2262-6900.** Main courses R$12–R$25 (US$6–US$13/£3.25–£6.75). AE, DC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–11pm. Metrô: Carioca.

Bistro do Paço ★ *Finds* BRAZILIAN The perfect spot to escape the heat and noise in downtown Rio. Inside this little oasis inside the

historic Paço Imperial, the thick whitewashed walls keep out the bustle while you recharge your batteries in the cool shade of the inner courtyard. The restaurant serves mostly bistro fare as well as a daily lunch special that will set you back R$15 to R$26 (US$7.50–US$13/£4–£7) for a plate of roast beef with a side order of pasta, spinach crepes with a ricotta-and-mushroom stuffing, or a chicken filet with applesauce and sautéed vegetables. For a light snack try a quiche, a freshly made sandwich with grilled vegetables, or a cold-cut plate. Desserts are strictly European: Austrian *linzertortes,* German fruit strudels, and Black Forest chocolate cakes, all of which go so well with a Brazilian *cafezinho.*

Praça XV 48 (inside the Paço Imperial), Centro. ✆ **021/2262-3613.** Main courses R$15–R$26 (US$7.50–US$13/£4–£7); sandwiches and quiches R$8–R$16 (US$4–US$8/£2–£4.25). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 10am–8pm; Sat–Sun noon–7pm. Bus: 119 or 415.

INEXPENSIVE

Beco das Sardinhas (Rei dos Frangos Maritimos) ★ *Finds* BRAZILIAN Known as "the sardine triangle," this corner in Rio's historic downtown is the perfect place to spend a Friday afternoon as locals gather to unwind from the workweek. It started in the '60s when the Portuguese owners of three small restaurants began selling fried sardines. They would cut open the fish and fry them like a filet, dubbed *frango maritimo* (chicken of the sea) by a jesting customer, and the name stuck to one of the restaurants. These days the triangle has expanded to include six restaurants in a pedestrian area between Rua do Acre and Rua Mayrink Veiga. Every Friday after 6pm it transforms into a giant TGIF party. The patio tables and counters fill up almost as quickly as the fried sardines, salted and breaded in manioc flour, come piping hot off the grill. Accompanied by a *loira gelada* ("icy blond," the local nickname for draft), it's the perfect way to start a weekend. Once the crowd reaches critical mass, someone will inevitably strike up some samba and the party will ignite.

Rua Miguel Couto 139, Centro. ✆ **021/2233-6119.** Everything under R$15 (US$7.50/£4). No credit cards. Mon–Fri 11am–10pm. Metrô: Uruguaiana.

Paladino ★★ BRAZILIAN Is Paladino a deli, with racks of spices and jars of capers and artichoke hearts? Is it a liquor store, as the hundreds of glass bottles lined up in gleaming wooden cases seem to suggest? Or is it, as the crowds seem to indicate, a bustling lunch bar with some of the best draft beer in town? Is an exact definition really important? Probably not. What matters is that the beer is clear and cold and comes at the wave of a finger, the atmosphere is that of Rio

in the Belle Epoque, and the sandwiches and snack plates are delicious. *Pratinhos,* as the latter are known in Portuguese, cost next to nothing—R$4 to R$8 (US$2–US$4/£1.10–£2.15)—and come loaded with sardines (whatever you do, order the sardines!) or olives, cheese, or great heaping stacks of smoked sausage. For about the same price there are also sandwiches, packed thick with cold cuts or cheese. All of this delectable nosh is served up by old-fashioned waiters in black pants and white shirts. Since 1907 an eclectic mix of lawyers, shopkeepers, workers, and executives has come here, and though none have ever succeeded in defining exactly what it is, they've never stopped coming.

Rua Uruguaiana 226, Centro. ✆ **021/2263-2094.** Reservations not accepted. Sandwiches and side dishes R$4–R$15 (US$2–US$7.50/£1.10–£4). No credit cards. Mon–Fri 7am–8:30pm; Sat 8am–noon. Metrô: Uruguaiana.

2 Santa Teresa

For a map of Santa Teresa restaurants, please refer to "Where to Stay & Dine in Flamengo, Glória, Catete, Urca, Botafogo & Santa Teresa" on p. 47.

EXPENSIVE

Aprazível ★★★ *Finds* BRAZILIAN When owner and chef Ana Castilho opened her house for a community event in 1996, she thought it would be a one-time happening. Now, 10 years later, she still runs her restaurant out of her home 4 days a week and things show no sign of slowing down. Part of the charm is the house itself. The restaurant takes up several rooms and spills over into the garden. And then there is the view of downtown Rio and Guanabara Bay. The kitchen serves up an intriguing variation on Brazilian cuisine, with an emphasis on tropical flavors. Interesting starters include fresh grilled palm hearts, and pumpkin cream soup with prawns, tart apple and cream. A popular main course is the *peixe tropical*, grilled fish in an orange sauce, served with coconut rice and baked bananas. A more hearty dish is the grilled lamb chop au jus and couscous. Desserts are best savored slowly. Our favorites were the *Morango do amor (*strawberries flambéed in orange juice and Cointreau) and the *Folia de Ouro Prêto* (grilled pineapple served with lime zest and coconut ice cream and a dash of *Limoncello* lemon liquor). Live *Chorinho* music on Thursdays.

Rua Aprazível 62, Santa Teresa. ✆ **021/3852-4935.** www.aprazivel.com.br. Reservations recommended. Main courses R$38–R$55 (US$19–US$28/£10–£15). AE, MC, V. Thurs 8pm–midnight; Fri–Sat noon–midnight; Sun 1–6pm. Taxi recommended.

Espirito Santa ✪✪ BRAZILIAN One of the newcomers in Santa Teresa, Espirito Santa seems to have found the perfect formula for success: a cute restaurant, a great patio looking out over Santa Teresa, and excellent Brazilian food. Chef Natacha Fink, who hails from the Amazon, has developed a menu around a number of Brazilian dishes with the emphasis on Amazonian cuisine. A very popular starter is the Tambaqui "ribs," breaded pieces of *tambaqui* (a popular Amazonian fish) served with a pesto made from the jambu herb. Alternatively, try the crabmeat served in a crunchy farofa. The salads also combine some interesting ingredients; try the green salad with toasted Brazil nuts and a passion-fruit vinaigrette. Main courses include a variety of fish and seafood dishes as well as meat dishes. The seafood *bobó*, a stew with coconut milk and spices, is excellent and great for sharing. For a lighter meal opt for the grilled fish with a cashew crust, served on a bed of grilled fresh palm heart. Meat lovers should try the *bacuri* steak, grilled filet mignon served with a bacuri (Amazonian fruit) sauce and mashed sweet potatoes. Equally exotic is the grilled duck filet, served with an *açai* sauce. For dessert, there's warm gâteau filled with guava cream and cheese.

Rua Almirante Alexandrino 264, Santa Teresa. ✆ **021/2508-7095.** Main courses R$28–R$44 (US$14–US$22/£7.50–£12). AE, DC, DC, MC, V. Mon, Wed, and Sun noon–7pm; Thurs–Sat noon–midnight. Closed Tues. Bus: 214, or take the tram, getting off just before the Largo dos Guimarães.

MODERATE

Sobrenatural ✪✪ SEAFOOD/BRAZILIAN One of the most popular restaurants in Santa Teresa, the open and spacious Sobrenatural is still often packed for lunch and dinner. The menu consists of seafood in a variety of shapes and sizes. Order a caipirinha and some shrimp dumplings *(pasteis de camarão)* to start with—each portion comes with 10 dumplings so it's great for sharing. The menu offers several grilled fish options, but the house specialty is really the *moqueca.* Just pick what kind of fish you want and it will come served in a piping hot stew with coconut milk, palm oil, shrimp sauce (optional), rice, and *pirão (*manioc purée). Portions are generous; moquecas serve two people, the seafood spaghetti feeds up to three. ***Note:*** This open, breezy restaurant is great in summer but best avoided on rainy days.

Rua Almirante Alexandrino 432, Santa Teresa. ✆ **021/2224-1003.** Main courses R$46–R$58 (US$23–US$29/£13–£16) for 2. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–midnight. Bus: 214, or take the tram, getting off at the Largo dos Guimarães.

3 Flamengo, Glória, Catete & Urca

For a map of restaurants, please refer to "Where to Stay & Dine in Flamengo, Glória, Catete, Urca, Botafogo & Santa Teresa" on p. 47.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Porcão ✪✪ BRAZILIAN/STEAK A mass carnivorous orgy, Porcão is where you go not to sample or taste or nibble, but to munch and stuff and gorge yourself on some of the best beef the world has to offer—in this case served up with some of the best views in the world. Porcão is a *churrascaria* (a chain, in fact; there are several in Rio, but this one has the best view) operating on the rodízio system. It's one price for all you can eat (dessert and drinks are extra), and once you sit down, an onslaught of waiters comes bearing all manner and variety of meat (steak cuts, roast cuts, filet mignon, chicken breast, chicken hearts, sausage of diverse kinds, and much more) which they slice to perfection on your plate. The "stop sign" card you receive is supposed to regulate this serving army—green means go ahead, and red says no more—but considering how little respect Cariocas have for red lights in general, it's hardly surprising that waiters keep coming no matter how abjectly you wave your little red surrender sign. Oh, and don't forget the nonmeat dishes: Included in your meal is a buffet with dozens of antipasto items, hot and cold seafood dishes, and at least 15 different kinds of salads and cheeses. Alas, no doggy bags allowed.

Avenida Infante Dom Henrique s/n, Parque do Flamengo. ✆ **021/2554-8535.** Reservations accepted. R$68 (US$34/£18) per person all-you-can-eat meat and buffet. 50% discount for children 6–9, free for children under 6. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–1am. Taxi recommended.

EXPENSIVE

Emporio Santa Fé ✪✪ BRAZILIAN/PASTA This lovely two-story restaurant overlooking the Aterro do Flamengo is one of the best restaurants in Flamengo. The ground floor has a small wine bar and a few tables but you really want to head upstairs and, if possible, grab one of the window tables in the elegant L-shaped dining room. The chef's forte is pasta; all dishes are made fresh and combine some creative flavors. We loved the ravioli with prawns in a leek sauce with mushrooms as well as the *Tortele Tricolor,* pasta rounds stuffed with smoked ricotta, figs, and Parma ham. Steak lovers have plenty to choose from, including filet mignon medallions with grilled brie and potatoes, or grilled tournedos in a balsamic jus, served with rice and mushrooms. The wine list has over 400 options covering most of the

world's regions, many reasonably priced (under R$70/US$35/£19).

Praia do Flamengo 2, Flamengo. ✆ **021/2245-6274.** Reservations accepted. R$32–R$58 (US$16–US$29/£9–£16) main courses. AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs noon–midnight; Fri–Sat noon–2am. Bus: Any bus to Praia do Flamengo.

MODERATE

Estação da República ★★ *Kids* KILO The Estação is top of the heap in that unique Brazilian category, the kilo restaurant. It offers a daily selection of at least 20 salads, a range of pastas, and many Brazilian favorites such as *feijoada* (bean stew), *vatapá* (seafood stew), and *bóbó* (shrimp stew). Fancier dishes include carpaccio and sushi. The *pièce de résistance* is the grill in the back of the restaurant where skilled chefs serve you a choice of beef, chicken, and a wide assortment of fish. It's a great place for children; they can see the food and try as much or as little as they like. Make your selection, weigh your plate, and find yourself a seat; drinks are served at your table. If the ground floor looks packed, take the escalator up to the second floor.

Rua do Catete 104, Catete. ✆ **021/2225-2650.** Reservations not accepted. R$32 (US$16/£9) per kilo. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. Metrô: Catete.

4 Botafogo

For a map of Botafogo restaurants, please refer to "Where to Stay & Dine in Flamengo, Glória, Catete, Urca, Botafogo & Santa Teresa" on p. 47.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Carême ★★★ *Finds* BRAZILIAN These days you are more likely to see chef Flavia Quaresma on TV than at her own restaurant. Ever since she opened her cozy Botafogo bistro, Flavia has turned into a food sensation. What's behind the fuss? It may just be that macho Brazilian culture still finds a top female chef something of a novelty. But her food does genuinely impress. The menu is deliberately kept small in order to give dishes the attention they deserve. On our most recent visit we started off with a brie soup with pear and nuts and some oysters in a sauce of sparkling wine. The pastas and risottos can be ordered in a small version as an appetizer or in a larger version as an entree. The menu usually offers a fish of the day as well, and several meat options such as the rack of lamb with star anise and basmati rice, the ostrich steak with pasta stuffed with Gorgonzola and dried plums, or roasted duck served with Japanese pumpkin purée and lychee sweet-and-sour sauce. For dessert try the passion-fruit

mousse with ginger, berries, and a raspberry coulis. The wine list is conservative with a small selection of well-chosen merlots, cabernet sauvignons, and chardonnays.

Rua Visconde de Caravelas 113, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2537-2274.** Reservations required. R$48–R$58 (US$24–US$29/£12–£15)). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 8pm–close (usually around 1am). Bus: 176 or 178.

EXPENSIVE

Kotobuki ✪ JAPANESE The food at Kotobuki is good, very good even, but it's not really better than a number of other Japanese restaurants around Rio. What is outstanding is what you're watching while you eat. Kotobuki offers a sweeping view of Botafogo Beach and Botafogo Bay with the pretty boats at anchor in the marina, and, backstopping it all, the soaring Pão de Açúcar. Located in the seventh-floor food court of the Botafogo Praia Shopping (I know, but food-court food is *different* in Brazil), Kotobuki offers lunchtime specials including the *prato executivo:* 15 pieces of sushi and sashimi with a miso soup (called *misoshuri* in Brazil), or beef stir-fry with rice and miso and a sunomuno salad for R$22 (US$11/£6). The *teppanyaki* for two is skillfully prepared at your table, as the chef cooks up thin slices of beef, tofu, and vegetables. A favorite lunch special, particularly on the weekends, is the all-you-can-eat Japanese buffet. It offers a variety of sushi, sashimi, appetizers, tempura, and *yakisoba* for R$38 (US$19/£10) on Sunday to Thursday and R$42 (US$21/£11) from Friday to Sunday and holidays.

Praia de Botafogo 400, 7th floor, Botafogo. ✆ **021/3141-9595.** Reservations accepted, but window tables are on a first-come, first-served basis. R$19–R$48 (US$9.50–US$24/£5–£13). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–midnight. Metrô: Botafogo.

Miam Miam ✪✪ CONTEMPORARY Funky is hard to find in Rio de Janeiro, so Miam Miam has found the perfect niche to fill. This funky and hip eatery/lounge/bar is whimsically decorated with fabulous kitsch touches, without trying too hard. The result is a cozy room divided into a lounge area with comfortable couches and love seats and a somewhat more staid dining room. The lounge area is really the place to be, perfect for enjoying a cocktail and sharing some appetizers. The menu offers a range of high-end pub food: salads, sandwiches, pastas, risotto, and a few main courses such as a grilled tuna in a peppercorn crust or a steak with baked potato. If you are planning to eat a full meal you may want to opt for one of the Formica tables but make sure you grab that spot on the couch for dessert and an after-dinner drink.

Rua General Góes Monteiro 34, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2244-0125.** Main courses R$21–R$37 (US$8.75–US$16/£4.40–£8). Tues–Fri noon–3pm and 7:30pm–midnight; Sat 8pm–1:30am. Bus: 472.

5 Copacabana & Leme

For a map of Copacabana and Leme restaurants, please refer to "Where to Stay & Dine in São Conrado, Leblon, Ipanema, Copacabana & Leme" on p. 33.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Le Pré-Catelan ★★★ FRENCH Although the Pré-Catelan has been one of Rio's best restaurants for ages, now it finally looks the part. Gone are the posh, glitzy 1980s *Dynasty*-style opulence and glamour. The dining room has been completely redone in black and white and now has a modern, contemporary bistro-feel; a much more fitting decor for one of the most interesting menus in the city. After years of serving up one of the best tasting menus in town, ultra-talented Chef Roland Villard has finally succumbed to pleas of customers to keep the best dishes around for more than a few weeks. Back to a regular menu, the dishes are anything but ordinary. The chef himself comes to each table to review the menu and explain the evening's dishes. Some of the best we've tried so far include the langoustine carpaccio served on a bed of crab salad with avocado mousse a trio of grilled, raw, and marinated tuna and the beautifully presented *namorado* fish. Other outstanding dishes include the grilled rack of lamb or veal *ossobucco*. Sommelier Jean Pierre is on hand to assist in choosing an appropriate wine from the 250 choices on offer. The after-dinner cheese cart has some interesting choices, such as a fresh goat cheese made in Teresopolis. Desserts—yes, there is more food—are made from scratch. If you can't choose, order the *symphonie* of desserts for a taste of four or five minidesserts. Enjoy, indulge, and walk off the calories along Copacabana's beach boulevard with a smile on your face.

Hotel Sofitel, Av. Atlântica 4240, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2525-1232.** Reservations required. Dress: business casual. Main courses R$44–R$68 (US$22–US$34/£12–£18). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Wed 7:30–11:30pm; Thurs–Sat 7:30pm–midnight. Bus: 415.

Marius STEAK One of the better all-you-can-eat rodízio systems, Marius serves up prime cuts of beef. In addition to this carnivore's dream, the buffet also includes excellent seafood such as fresh oysters, shrimp, langoustines, smoked salmon, and paella, in addition to

salads and other side dishes. But back to what we came for. Here at Marius, waiters will come out over and over with your favorite cuts of steak, whether it is juicy tender rib-eye, T-bone, rack of lamb, or any of the other kinds of typical Brazilian beef cuts such as maminha, alcatra, picanha, and fraldinha.

Av. Atlântica 290A, Leme. ✆ **021/2543-6363.** Reservations accepted. R$79 (US$40/£21) per person, all-you-can-eat buffet. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–4pm and 6pm–midnight; Sat–Sun noon–midnight. Bus: 472.

EXPENSIVE

Da Brambini ★ *Finds* ITALIAN For traditional Italian food in a cozy little bistro, look no further than Da Brambini. Decorated with family photos of the Brambinis, who hail from northern Italy, the restaurant has the welcoming and friendly atmosphere of an Italian trattoria. To start with, indulge in the *couvert*—a tasty antipasto platter with olives, salami, tuna paste, grilled eggplant, and freshly baked breads. Other worthwhile appetizers include the polenta with fresh funghi or with Gorgonzola. The main courses include veal with mushrooms, traditional *osso buco* (veal shanks stewed in wine), as well as a number of outstanding pasta dishes. Da Brambini certainly doesn't skimp on ingredients; the handmade ravioli with shrimp is just swimming with the little critters, all smothered in a creamy seafood sauce. The linguine with mussels, *sururu* (a tiny clam), and *vongole* are equally tasty. An Italian restaurant is bound to have a half-decent wine list, and Da Brambini doesn't disappoint with a good selection of Italian reds, starting at R$39 (US$20/£11) a bottle. The service is unhurried, and the staff is happy to let you linger over your dinner.

Av. Atlântica 514, Leme. ✆ **021/2275-4346.** Reservations recommended. Main courses R$28–R$46 (US$14–US$23/£7.50–£13). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–1am. Bus: 472.

Siri Mole ★★ BAHIAN Siri Mole is one of the best Bahian restaurants in town. Although the location on the corner of the busy Rua Francisco Otaviano is less than inspired, the food is worth the trip. The *moquecas* are outstanding, perfectly balancing the coconut milk, red dendê palm oil, and fresh cilantro that give the rich flavor to this signature dish. Try a moqueca with prawns, octopus, fish, or lagoustine. The grilled seafood and fish are also excellent, but make sure your table tries at least one moqueca. Portions are a reasonable size and can often be shared. A great way to sample some of Siri Mole's best is during Saturday's lunch buffet (noon–5pm) when the restaurant serves up a variety of delicacies (R$42/US$21/£11 per

person, all you can eat). Whatever you try, make sure to save a bit of room for dessert. A cool and smooth favorite is the *quindim,* a creamy coconut pudding. For a bigger sugar hit try the *cocada*—pure coconut mixed with pure cane sugar—then wash it down with a hot and black *cafezinho.*

Rua Francisco Otaviano 50, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2267-0894.** Reservations accepted. Main courses R$60–R$95 (US$30–US$47/£16–£26). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon 7pm–midnight; Tues–Sun noon–midnight. Bus: 415.

MODERATE

Alfaia ★★ *Finds* PORTUGUESE This lovely neighborhood restaurant, tucked away off Avenida N.S. de Copacabana, has been serving up great Portuguese food for 15 years. The house specialties are the dishes made with *bacalhau* (salted codfish). Start off with the perfectly deep-fried *bolinhos de bacalhau* (codfish dumplings). The most popular main course is the *bacalhau à Bras,* oven-baked codfish served with potatoes, scrambled egg, onion, and olives. The cod dishes also come in half portions. We found that with appetizers and dessert the half dish was plenty for two people. Other dishes include the classic sole *á belle meuniére* sauce, with butter, garlic, and mushrooms and side of potatoes and vegetables. The grilled octopus with red peppers, onions, and roasted potatoes is also a good choice. The wine list includes some excellent Portuguese whites and reds. For dessert there are delicious Portuguese pastries. The bestseller is the pastel de nata, a flaky pastry stuffed with creamy custard.

Rua Inhangá 30, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2236-1222.** Main courses R$46–R$85 (US$23–US$43/£12–£23) for 2. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–midnight; Sun noon–11pm. Metrô: Cardeal Arcoverde.

Arab ★★★ MIDDLE EASTERN Arab not only has one terrific waterfront patio (on Copa beach), but it also serves delicious Middle Eastern cuisine. For lunch the kitchen puts on an excellent kilo buffet, great for trying a variety of dishes. Offerings include tasty salads with chickpeas, lentils, grilled vegetables, and outstanding main dishes such as the roasted chicken with apricots, couscous with cod, grilled lamb kabobs, and piping hot, fresh pita breads. In the evenings, dishes are a la carte. Our favorites include the tray of *mezzes* (appetizer plates). Perfect for sharing, these plates come with enough munchies for three or four people and include hummus, baba ghanouj, savory pastries with ground beef or lamb, and other finger food. For a main course try the lamb dishes such as the *fakhas kharouf,* a lamb stew in red wine served with saffron rice and toasted almonds. The couscous dishes with chicken or lamb are also delicious

and great for sharing. Desserts are dangerously rich and include sweet pastries made with sugar, rosewater, and almonds or pistachios.

Av. Atlântica 1936, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2235-6698.** Main courses R$25–R$42 (US$13–US$21/£6.75–£11). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon 5pm–1am; Tues–Sun 8am–1am. Metrô: Cardeal Arcoverde.

INEXPENSIVE

The Bakers QUICK BITE/DESSERT The Bakers offers the perfect combination of American-style sandwiches and Brazilian sweets and desserts. The sandwich menu includes a variety of breads not often seen on Carioca menus, including ciabatta, eight-grain, whole wheat, and challah. The Al Pacino sandwich comes with Parma ham, mozzarella, sun-dried tomatoes, and a Mediterranean dressing. The Romeo and Juliette is a delicious combination of chicken breast, herb-flavored *catupiru* cheese, greens, and an apricot dressing. Once you've chewed through one of those, you can move on to the dessert. Choose from a mouthwatering selection of cakes and pies, such as Ecstasy, a chocolate cake with fresh strawberries, whipped cream, and chocolate sauce, or for something more nutty, the chocolate mousse cake with cashews. The bakery also serves up a mean brew of cappuccino with a rich and luscious layer of foam.

Rua Santa Clara 86, Copacabana. ✆ **021/3209-1212.** www.thebakers.com.br. Everything under R$15 (US$7.50/£4). No credit cards. Daily 9am–8pm. Bus: 415.

Shirley ★★ *Finds* SPANISH This hole-in-the-wall Spanish seafood restaurant has been packing them in for years and still has locals and visitors lining up on the weekends. The restaurant is small, the tables close together and the older waiters not exactly perky, but the food is worth the trip. When you finally nab a spot, order the *couvert* while perusing the menu; you get a plate of chunky sardines in tomato sauce, olives, and lots of pickled veggies. It's better than many of the appetizers, and goes quite nicely with the house sangria. The menu offers a range of fish and seafood dishes, including typically Spanish items such as paella and zarzuela, a soup-like stew. The prawn dishes are made with the fresh, monster-size prawns you see in the display window. Fish lovers have the option of sole, sea bass, and snapper, which can be grilled, sautéed, broiled, or breaded. Plates come with generous side dishes of vegetables, potatoes, or rice and will easily feed two people.

Rua Gustavo Sampaio 620, Leme. ✆ **021/2275-1398.** Main courses R$26–R$56 (US$13–US$28/£7–£15), most are for 2 people. No credit cards. Daily 11am–midnight. Metrô: Integração. Bus from Metrô: Cardeal Arcoverde to Leme or bus 472.

6 Ipanema

For a map of Ipanema restaurants, please refer to "Where to Stay & Dine in São Conrado, Leblon, Ipanema, Copacabana & Leme" on p. 33.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Madame Butterfly ✪✪ JAPANESE Rio's favorite Japanese restaurant, Madame Butterfly continues to offer creative and interesting cuisine. The two sisters Marina and Teresa who run the restaurant are always on the lookout for new ideas and serve some uniquely Japanese dishes (not adapted to Western taste buds) such as *umewan* soup, a rich broth made with Japanese plums, algae, and horseradish as well as delicious Brazilian-Japanese hybrids such as *gyoza* with Brazilian *abóbora* pumpkin, ginger-flavored lobster served on a cheese risotto, or a caramelized lamb chop with ginger and sesame seeds. Another interesting twist is the *casquinha de siri,* a Japanese-inflected version of the traditional Bahian appetizer. As done in the Butterfly, the dish features crabmeat and spices on a half shell sprinkled with fresh fish eggs. Madame Butterfly also serves exquisite Kobe beef. Try a grilled skewer or carpaccio. To sample a variety of dishes, diners can also opt for a tasting menu for two (R$115/US$57/£31).

Rua Barão de Torre 472, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2267-4347.** Reservations recommended on weekends. R$36–R$88 (US$18–US$44/£10–£24). AE, DC, MC. Daily noon–1am. Bus: 415.

Margutta ✪✪✪ ITALIAN Restaurants often have a limited life span so those that have been around for 10 years or more must be doing something right. Remember to reserve a table—even on a Tuesday night the place was packed. Owner and chef Paolo Neroni greeted us at the door. He is there on most nights to personally oversee the finishing touches on all dishes before they are served. We started off with deliciously sautéed mushrooms, followed by the *farfalle al gamberi e zafferano,* bowtie pasta with prawns in creamy saffron. For our entree we tried the signature dish, the *Pesce alla Neroni* (oven-roasted fish with fine herbs and a side of roasted potatoes and tomatoes). What really impressed us was the simplicity of the dishes. No convoluted sauces, long lists of ingredients, or fancy fusion. Most dishes seem to consist of three or four ingredients and just the right amount of herbs to balance out the flavors. The result is a simple and elegant cuisine that brings out the best of all ingredients. The restaurant itself is lovely: cozy and intimately lit and pleasantly decorated

with nice linen and fresh flowers. All in all it's easy to see why Margutta is still at the top of its class.

Av. Henrique Dumont 62, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2259-3718.** Reservations recommended. R$28–R$68 (US$14–US$34/£7.50–£18). AE, DC, MC. Mon–Fri 6pm–1am; Sat and holidays noon–1am; Sun noon–midnight. Bus: 415.

EXPENSIVE

Zazá Bistrô Tropical ★★ BRAZILIAN/FUSION Zazá is Rio's funkiest eatery, serving up a creative and interesting menu of South American cuisine fused with Oriental flavors. Everything about Zazá is fun, from the playful and eclectic decorations to the unique and excellent dishes. Diners can choose from a table on the terrace or in the dining room. The more adventurous can ask for a spot upstairs where everyone sits on the floor, leaning back on masses of silk-covered pillows. Surrounded by candlelight and lanterns, the room feels like a palace from the *Arabian Nights.* The menu offers plenty of choices. Appetizers include a deliciously grilled squid salad served on a bed of greens with an orange vinaigrette and mango chutney, or an order of mini-*acarajés* (deep-fried dumplings made of mashed beans and stuffed with spicy shrimp) served with tomato chutney instead of the usual hot-pepper sauce. Main courses also mix up the flavors. Try the *namorado* fish filet served with a purée of banana and palm heart, or a prawn ravioli served with grilled salmon in a saffron sauce. For vegetarians there is always a daily special, made with seasonal produce and interesting spices.

Rua Joana Angelica 40, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2247-9101.** R$28–R$42 (US$14–US$21/£7.50–£11). AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 7:30pm–1am; Fri–Sat 7:30pm–1:30am. Bus: 415.

MODERATE

Casa da Feijoada ★ BRAZILIAN Brazilian tradition dictates that the full-on *feijoada* meal is only served on Saturdays, leaving you high and dry bean-wise the other 6 days of the week. That's where the Casa da Feijoada comes to the rescue. There may be restaurants with better *feijoada* in town—there are certainly better-decorated ones—but what they can't offer you is *feijoada* when you want it. At the Casa any old day of the week you can experience Brazil's national dish with all the trimmings. To get off to a good start try the *caldo de feijão* (bean soup), washed down with a *batida de limão* (lime cocktail) to line your stomach, as the Brazilians would say. Now you are ready to bring on the actual bean stew, served in a clay pot with whatever meat you've a hankering for, be it sausage, bacon, *carne seca*

(dried meat, highly recommended), pork loin, and other more obscure cuts. Side dishes include white rice, stir-fried cabbage, *farofa* (roasted manioc flour), and orange slices. If you like it spicy, ask for some *pimenta,* and they will bring you oil-soaked *malagueta* peppers to drizzle on the beans. Have another lime cocktail standing by in case you underestimate the heat.

Rua Prudente de Moraes 10, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2523-4994.** R$21–R$38 (US$8.75–US$16/£4.40–£8) main course; *feijoada* meal R$49 (US$25/£13) per person, including appetizers, dessert, and drinks. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–11pm. Bus: 415.

Churrascaria Carretão *Kids Value* BRAZILIAN/STEAK For a *churrascaria* meal without breaking the bank, try Carretão. The system is similar to many rodízio restaurants: meats are delivered to your table by a constant parade of waiters carrying a variety of cuts, and you can help yourself to a large buffet with a selection of 20 salads, various types of sushi, and even some grilled fish such as salmon or trout. In addition to beef, Carretão also serves up a variety of pork, sausage, chicken, and turkey cuts. Children under 5 eat free, those ages 5 to 9 pay only half price. Just keep them away from the fancy fruit smoothies and desserts that the waiters eagerly push on you; these jack up the bill pretty quickly.

Rua Visconde de Pirajá 112, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2267-3965.** Reservations accepted. R$28 (US$14/£7.50) all-you-can-eat, drinks and desserts extra. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. Bus: 404 or 474 (corner Teixeira de Melo). Also in Copacabana: Rua Ronald de Carvalho 55, ✆ **021/2543-2666** and Rua Siqueira Campos 23, ✆ **021/2236-3435.**

Delirio Tropical ★ BRAZILIAN For a lighter and healthier meal or snack, stop in at the Delirio Tropical. The menu includes delicious fresh salads such as the caprese (a layered tower of sliced tomatoes, basil, and mozzarella), salpição (shredded chicken with carrots and corn), pasta salads, and at least six other salads. You have the option of putting together a meal with a selection of salads alone or you can add some grilled meat or make a choice from the daily specials of hot dishes, such as stuffed cannelloni or roast beef. The sandwich bar also makes excellent sandwiches, with your choice of bread, filling, and salad. The service is cafeteria-style, so you choose your dishes, load up your tray and find a spot. The advantage is that it is fast and the buffet always offers a delicious selection of fresh salads, vegetables, and light meals. Perfect brunch spot!

Rua Garcia d'Avila 48, Ipanema. ✆ **021/3201-2977** Main courses R$14–R$32 (US$7–US$16/£4–£8.50). AE, MC, V. Daily 9am–9pm. Bus: 415.

INEXPENSIVE

Big Nectar *Value* QUICK BITE One of Rio's best *lanchonetes* (dinner or lunch counter), Big Nectar is a bit like a magician's top hat. You glance into this hole-in-the-wall diner and think there's nothing there, then the guy behind the counter conjures up any kind of fruit juice you care to name, all of it made fresh and to order. Actually, the menu in this standing-room-only spot lists just over 25 different kinds of fruit juice. In addition to the standards such as passion fruit *(maracujá),* pineapple *(abacaxi),* or cashew fruit *(caju),* there's *carambola* (star fruit), *goiaba* (guava), *jaca* (jack fruit), and *açerola* (red juice from the tiny *açerola* fruit). This is where things get fun. You can mix anything with anything else. Try *laranja com açerola* (orange juice with *açerola,* a very popular combination); *maracujá* with mango; or pineapple and guava, cashew, and açerola. Some of these work, some don't. The magicians behind the counter are full of suggestions if you have any doubts. Or just throw caution to the wind and see what comes out of the hat. For a quick lunch or snack, Big Nectar also serves a selection of sandwiches and individual-size pizzas.

Teixeira de Melo 34A, Ipanema. No phone. Everything under R$12 (US$6/£3.25). No credit cards. Daily 7am–midnight. Bus: 404 or 474.

LEBLON

VERY EXPENSIVE

Bar d'Hotel ★★ *Finds* ITALIAN On the first floor of the Marina Hotel in Ipanema, this hip eatery overlooks the most famous beach in the world yet doesn't even try to cash in on the view. Instead, what attracts the trendy crowd to eat, drink, and be merry is each other. Artists, actors, soccer players, designers, and others too cool to look at the ocean compete for each other's attention, all the while trying not to look like they're looking. Fortunately, above and beyond the posing the food is also great, so we mere mortals can remain happily oblivious to the star-spying and just have fun. If you have to wait at the bar for a table (very likely if you don't make reservations), try a lemon kir royal (champagne with lemon sorbet) or a sake *caipirinha.* Once seated, the waiter will come over with a blackboard listing the daily specials. The cuisine leans toward Italian with tropical accents. Appetizers include four types of bruschetta; the sampler plate comes with one of each. Main courses range from a delicious goat-cheese ravioli in tomato sauce to a curried prawn risotto with banana-chutney grilled salmon served with a rich and creamy artichoke risotto.

The restaurant is also open for breakfast and lunch, but the cool people don't show up until after 11pm. The restaurant is also a great place to just have a drink.

Av. Delfim Moreira 696, 2nd floor (inside the Marina All Suites Hotel), Leblon. ✆ **021/2540-4990.** Reservations recommended. Main courses R$24–R$48 (US$12–US$24/£6.50–£13). MC, V. Thurs–Sat 7am–2am; Sun–Wed 8am–midnight. Bus: 415.

Garcia & Rodrigues ✪✪ BISTRO Garcia & Rodrigues was once a veritable food megacomplex, with a deli, bakery, cafe, patisserie, ice-cream parlor, fine dining, and wine bar, but things have since been restructured and simplified. There is no longer a Garcia nor a Rodrigues in the enterprise, and what remains is an excellent bistro with a simple menu and an outstanding bakery and cafe. Open daily from 8am, the cafe serves up an excellent breakfast, a great selection of sandwiches, cheese plates, and some of the finest baked goods in town. The bistro opens at noon and offers risottos, pasta, grilled steak, and seafood, including a wonderful grilled salmon in orange-saffron sauce. You can also put a great spread together by ordering various appetizers such as the carpaccio, the bruschetta with brie, honey, and chutney and a cold-cut or pâté plate, served with a basket of freshly baked bread. Luckily the wine cellar (or rather attic) remains; the maitre d' will happily help you choose an appropriate bottle.

Av. Ataulfo de Paiva 1251, Leblon. ✆ **021/2512-8188.** Main courses R$24–R$52 (US$12–US$26/£6.50–£14). AE, DC, MC, V. Cafe and bakery daily 8am–midnight; bistro Mon–Thurs noon–12:30am. Bus: 415.

EXPENSIVE

Giuseppe Grill ✪✪ STEAK We came here on a rare cold Rio night looking only for a good steak and a bottle of red wine. We left thoroughly impressed with this restaurant; not only was the steak outstanding and the wine list affordably priced, the dining lounge itself is a pleasant, modern room, service was excellent and attentive—and oddly enough, we had some of the best grilled octopus ever! The house specialty is beef, no doubt about it. You can choose from grilled beef or slowly roasted beef on a charcoal grill. Both options include excellent cuts such as prime rib, Argentine chorizo steak, filet mignon, and rump steak as well as beef ribs, pork, and chicken. Each main course comes with a side dish; you can choose from a variety of salads, rice, and potatoes served fried, roasted, baked, or sautéed. And then, oddly enough, the restaurant also serves up a selection of outstanding fresh seafood. Have a look at the catch of the day and ask for the waiter's recommendation. We went

with the octopus, grilled to perfection and served tossed with arugula as a warm salad and were thoroughly impressed. Best of all, a steak dinner for two with appetizers, a bottle of Argentine Malbec, and coffee barely cracked the US$100 (£54) mark.

Ave. Bartolomeu Mitre 370, Leblon. ✆ **021/2249-3055.** Main courses R$36–R$58 (US$18–US$29/£10–£16). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs noon–4pm and 7pm–midnight; Fri–Sat noon–1am; Sun noon–11pm. Bus: 415

Nam Thai ★★ THAI The best Thai restaurant in Rio is also the only Thai restaurant in Rio. Fortunately, the food is quite good! The restaurant is small and cozy and has an extensive menu with all the classic Thai dishes and a few selections from other Asian countries, including dim sum appetizers, Vietnamese pho soup, and a Malaysian mild curry. That said, we recommend starting off with one of the Thai soups, either the Tom Kha Kai, a rich coconut broth with chicken and lemon grass, or the clear and spicy shrimp soup, Tom Yum Kung. Main courses include a variety of Thai curries, either green or red and your choice of beef, prawn, chicken, or duck. The duck curry is excellent. The rich meat can hold its own against the spicy red curry, and pieces of pineapple add a perfect sweet-tangy flavor. Other dishes worth trying include the pad Thai rice noodle or the fried rice noodle with squid, broccoli, and fresh basil. Fish lovers will enjoy one of the steamed fish dishes, delicately flavored with lemon grass or ginger and garlic. If you still have room for dessert, try the flambéed fruit with clove and cinnamon ice cream to finish your meal with a hint of spice.

Rua Rainha Guilhermina 95, Leblon. ✆ **021/2259-2962.** www.namthai.com.br. Main courses R$22–R$48 (US$11–US$24/£6–£13). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon 7pm–1am; Tues–Fri noon–5pm and 7pm–1am; Sat noon–1am; Sun noon–11pm. Bus: 415.

INEXPENSIVE

Bibi Sucos ★ *Value* QUICK BITE The overhead menu at this popular neighborhood juice bar is refreshingly straightforward: juice, juice, and juice. You pick a fruit combination, and into the blender the ingredients go. It's trendy in newly health-conscious Rio to add on a scoop of protein powder for strength, *guaraná* for energy, or pollen for general health. Bibi also sells hamburgers, grilled cheese sandwiches, and a variety of Brazilian savory pastries.

Av. Ataulfo de Paiva 591, Leblon. ✆ **021/2259-4298.** Everything under R$10 (US$5/£2.75). No credit cards. Daily 8am–2am; later on weekends if busy. Bus: 415.

KURT *Value* DESSERT So what if Leblon has a higher than average number of dessert shops? This is one we couldn't leave out. Long a mainstay of Leblon, German pastry maker Kurt passed away a few

Rio's Avenida Gourmet

We could probably fill half the Rio section with reviews of restaurants on the **Rua Dias Ferreira.** This windy street on the far edge of Leblon has become a one-stop shop for gourmands. For vegetarians, there's not one but two restaurants: the excellent kilo-restaurant **O Celeiro** (Rua Dias Ferreira 199; ✆ 021/2274-7843). You pay by the weight so help yourself to the delicious offerings and grab a spot on the large patio. And then there's the new kid on the block, **Quitanda Vegetal** (Rua Dias Ferreira 135; ✆ 021/2249-2301), which offers a lunch service that includes a variety of vegetarian and light cuisine dishes. To enjoy a stylish afternoon tea with all the trimmings, head over to **Eliane Carvalho** (Rua Dias Ferreira 242; ✆ 021/2540-5438). Closed on Mondays. Those who prefer to linger over their food can try **Doce Delicia** (Rua Dias Ferreira 48; ✆ 021/2249-2970), which serves grilled chicken, steak, or fish and your choice of two side dishes. For pasta there's **Quadrucci** (Rua Dias Ferreira 233; ✆ 021/2512-4551), which is open for lunch and dinner and has a great patio. For fine dining there are a number of options, mostly only open in the evenings. **Zuka** (Rua Dias Ferreira 233; ✆ 021/3205-7154) offers creative seafood dishes such as crab in filo pastry or grilled tuna in a cashew-nut crust. Across the street you'll find **Carlota** (Rua Dias Ferreira 64; ✆ 021/2540-6821), chosen by *Condé Nast Traveler* as one of the 50 most exciting restaurants in the world. Chef Carlota opened this Rio restaurant after her original São Paulo digs became the toast of the town. As in the original, her Rio dishes are fresh and creative, although people have complained that the portions are small. Farther down on the corner of Rua Rainha Guilermina is the sushi hot spot of the city, **Sushi Leblon** (Rua Dias Ferreira 256; ✆ 021/2512-7830). On Thursday through Saturday evenings the lines can be long, but most people don't seem to mind the wait. If you're up on who's who in the Brazilian entertainment world, you can pass the time spotting artists and actresses. If a smaller and intimate sushi venue is more your style, check out **Mirai** (Rua Dias Ferreira 116; ✆ 021/2511-1476). This very stylish hole in the wall seats no more than 30, making it the perfect place for a romantic evening. The menu is quite varied—try the deep-fried tuna roll with a honey-sweetened soy sauce for dipping or the tempura prawn roll with smoked salmon.

years ago but his legacy (and treats) live on. Now in the hands of Kurt's grandsons (who obviously inherited the sweet gene; they run the pastry shop The Bakers; see review in "Copacabana & Leme," earlier in this chapter), this tiny shop in Leblon remains one of the best places in town to go for an *apfel strude,* pecan pie, or apricot cake. A famous Kurt creation is the "bee sting" (picada de abelha), a chocolate cake the recipe of which is a closely guarded family secret.

Rua General Urquiza 117 (corner of Rua Ataulfo de Paiva), Leblon. ✆ **021/2294-0599.** Everything under R$15 (US$7.50/£4). No credit cards. Mon–Fri 8am–7pm; Sat 8am–5pm. Bus: 415.

Mil Frutas ★ DESSERT One of the best ice-cream parlors in town, Mil Frutas offers a whole gamut of chocolate and fruit flavors, including some exotic ones from northern Brazil such as *açai, cupuaçu,* and *caja.* The staff is happy to give you a taste of several flavors before you decide on one, or two, or three.

Rua Garcia d'Avila 134, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2521-1584.** Everything under R$12 (US$6/£3.25). No credit cards. Daily 10:30am–1am. Bus: 415.

JARDIM BOTANICO

VERY EXPENSIVE

Quadrifoglio ★★★ ITALIAN Another Rio favorite, Quadrifoglio proves that you don't need trendy gimmicks to run a successful restaurant. Chef and owner Silvia Bianchi shows off her skills in the kitchen, making some of the family favorites she learned from her grandmother in Italy. No frilly, prissy cuisine; Silvia's food is rich and hearty. Maitre d' (or should that be maîtresse?) Marlene is a wealth of knowledge at the front end. She knows the menu inside out and can offer excellent suggestions for wine. The list includes—surprise—a good variety of Italian. Most bottles will set you back R$60 to R$120 (US$30–US$60/£16–£32). Memorable dishes include the *mignonette al gorgonzola* (steak in a creamy Gorgonzola sauce, served with fresh pasta) and the *agnello al rosmarino* (a succulently grilled filet of lamb with fresh rosemary and a side of pumpkin gnocchi). Those who like veal will love the tender veal on a bed of orange risotto. True, this is not exactly light cuisine but the dishes are worth a calorie splurge. And speaking of splurging, one of the best desserts we have come across recently was the *profumi mediterranei*—roasted fresh fig served with a scoop of lavender ice cream and topped with toasted almonds and some crème anglaise. I wish my grandmother had taught me to cook like that!

Rua J.J. Seabra 19, Jardim Botânico. ✆ **021/2294-1433.** Reservations recommended. Main courses R$34–R$58 (US$17–US$29/£9–£16). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri

noon–4pm and 7:30pm–1am; Sat 7:30–1am; Sun noon–5pm. Bus: 572 (from Leblon or Copacabana) or 170 (from downtown).

EXPENSIVE

Capricciosa ✪ PIZZA One of the trendiest pizza restaurants in town, Capricciosa is where the hip and beautiful people eat. A large wood-burning oven dominates the back of the room and turns out great-tasting pizzas and calzones, from the plain Pizza Margarita with mozzarella, Parmesan, and fresh basil and tomato to the signature Capricciosa with tomato, ham, artichoke, mushrooms, bacon, and egg. The restaurant also has a delicious cold-cut and antipasto buffet, served with slices of homemade crusty bread, and offers a selection of pasta dishes. Those who prefer a more low-key and intimate setting can opt for the wine bar, to the left of the busy and bustling main dining room; the menus are the same. This ain't cheap pizza . . . in fact at these prices you could be digging into a juicy steak or a tasty seafood dish elsewhere but that is the price you pay to hobnob with Rio's rich and famous.

Rua Maria Angelica 37, Jardim Botânico. ✆ **021/2527-2656.** Main courses R$28–R$42 (US$14–US$21/£7.50–£11). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6pm–1am (later if it's busy). Bus: 572 (from Leblon or Copacabana) or 170 (from downtown).

MODERATE

Couve Flor ✪ KILO The mother of all kilo restaurants, Couve Flor is where it all started in the mid-'80s. Even now that the system has been widely adopted, Couve Flor still goes the extra mile. The menu offers an astonishing range of dishes, including elaborate and interesting options such as rabbit stew, fish *moqueca,* fresh pasta, at least 20 different kinds of salads, and grilled meats. The buffet even offers vegetarian choices such as stroganoff made with soybean *meat.* In the evenings Couve Flor also serves a selection of pizzas from a wood-burning oven and the weekend lunch buffet is legendary with even more dishes and a choice of 15 desserts. The beauty of the kilo system is that you can have a bite of as many dishes as strike your fancy.

Rua Pacheco Leão 724, Jardim Botânico. ✆ **021/2239-2191.** www.couveflor.com.br. Price per kilo: R$34–R$39 (US$18–U$20/£9–£11). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–5pm and 7–11pm; Sat noon–11pm; Sun 11:30am–9pm. Bus: 572 (from Leblon or Copacabana) or 170 (from downtown).

LAGOA

EXPENSIVE

Bistrô 66 ✪✪✪ FRENCH Bistrô 66 chef Thomas Troisgros may not be the best French chef in town (that honor belongs still to Tom's

papa, Claude), but the younger Troisgros has certainly inherited his father's culinary skills. This cozy eatery offers outstanding, authentic French cuisine at still affordable prices. If you're a seafood fan don't miss the Moules Mariniere; a big steaming pot of mussels in a fragrant white-wine sauce, perfect for dipping with some crusty bread. Another great appetizer is the fresh shiitake mushroom carpaccio with generous shavings of fresh Parmesan cheese. Main courses include pastas and risottos, including the house specialty, a risotto with Parma ham, brie, and rucula or a fettucini with fresh mushrooms and white truffle olive oil. Meat dishes include an excellent roasted lamb with a tomato and lemon *farofa* confit and a delicious grilled duck in orange sauce. You can also order a more simple steak dish—filet mignon or tender picanha and your choice of sauce (pepper, red onion, or wine). All dishes are served with either crispy thin potato slivers or basmati rice. And then there are the desserts: scrumptious apple pie, mango strudel, and a variety of delicious pastries.

Av. Alexandre Ferreira 66, Lagoa. ✆ **021/2266-0838.** www.66bistro.com.br. R$38–R$52 (US$19–US$26/£10–£14) or R$72 (US$36/£19) for an appetizer, main course, and dessert (any item from the a la carte menu). MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–midnight; Sun noon–4pm. Taxi recommended.

5 Exploring Rio de Janeiro

Most people stay in the beachfront neighborhoods of Copacabana and Ipanema. They're great places to soak up the sun and to people-watch. But even if your time is limited, it's worth making the effort to explore further. In the historic downtown neighborhoods of Centro, Lapa, and Santa Teresa you'll find narrow cobblestone streets, grand plazas, gold-covered churches, and buildings of the baroque, Beaux Arts, and Art Deco styles. Shoppers will be in heaven; browse the crafts markets for souvenirs or check out the small shops in downtown's pedestrian streets. Upscale shoppers will love the Rio Sul mall and the fancy boutiques in Rio's tony Ipanema. If you have the energy, Rio's stunning setting offers numerous recreational activities: Hiking, hang gliding, surfing, rock climbing, and kayaking are just a few options. Taking in a game of soccer is an adventure in itself. Nowhere are the crowds larger or livelier than at Rio's Maracanã stadium. The city's vibrant cultural scene comes to life in the evening and never disappoints: See some of the local samba bands in Lapa, or emerging talents at the city's many live music venues, or splurge to see a big national star such as Caetano Veloso.

1 Suggested Rio de Janeiro Itineraries

IF YOU HAVE 1 DAY For most of us pale-skinned gringos, it's an act of utter insanity on the first day to set foot on the beach during the peak afternoon sunshine. On your first day **hit the beach early.** Enjoy the clear air and an hour or so of tanning in the softer morning rays. Then head up to the **Corcovado** and see Rio laid out below you in all its glory. Stop in for a quick lunch at any of Rio's countless kilo restaurants, then in the afternoon head to **Centro** to explore what you've seen from on high. Wander **old Rio,** making sure to check out the Uruguaiana shopping district, and to poke your head into any one of countless baroque churches. Finish your walk with a nice cold *chopp* (beer) at a sidewalk cafe in **Cinelândia,** or in the countless patios in the **Arcos do Teles.** Have dinner back

in the Zona Sul, at one of the top-notch restaurants in **Leblon.** If it's a Saturday in pre-**Carnaval** season, go see a **samba school rehearsal.** Or find a **botequim** or restaurant that plays music and enjoy Rio until the wee hours.

IF YOU HAVE 2 DAYS On your second day get some culture. Go see the **Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM),** or if painting's not your thing see the **Museu Histórico Nacional,** the **Forte de Copacabana,** or **Ilha Fiscal.** Have lunch overlooking **Sugarloaf (Pão de Açúcar)** at the **Circulo Militar** in **Urca.** Afterward, work off those calories by climbing up to the Pão de Açúcar's peak. Reward yourself for your efforts by having dinner at the **Porcão** on **Flamengo** beach—all-you-can-eat Brazilian barbecue, with a view of the bay and the Sugarloaf thrown in (see dining review on p. 58). In the evening, go for a drink, some dancing, and some live Brazilian music at any of a number of spots in **Lapa.**

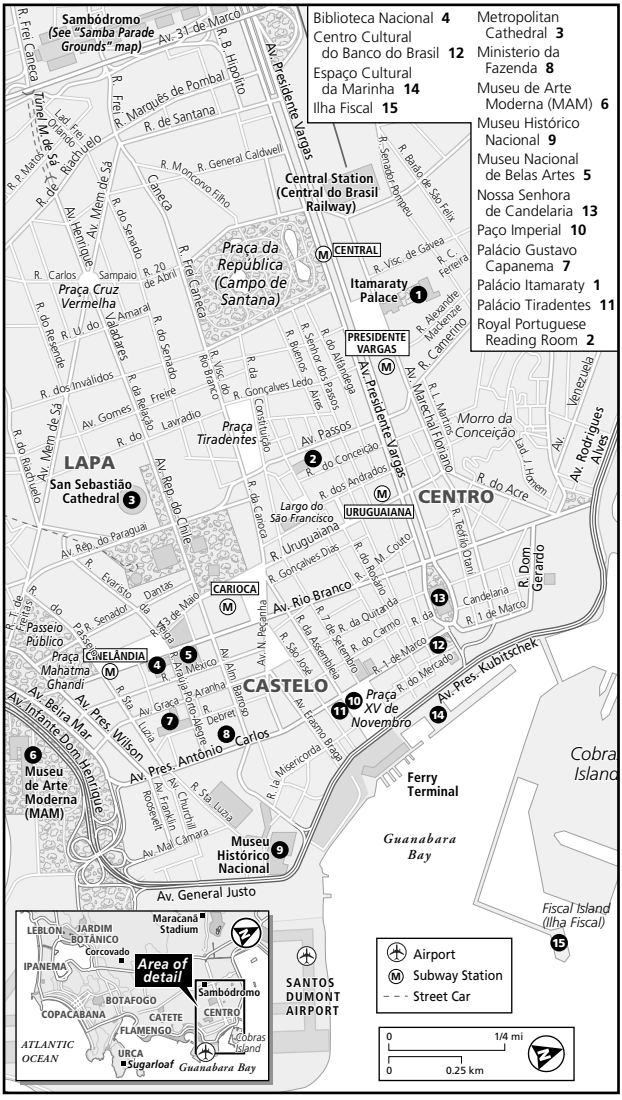
IF YOU HAVE 3 DAYS In the morning take the old streetcar across the **Arcos da Lapa** to the quirky hilltop neighborhood of **Santa Teresa.** See the **Museu Chácara do Céu,** or clamber up the catwalks in the **Ruin Park.** Enjoy the view. In the afternoon, go **hang gliding.** Soar above the beach, feeling the wind, admiring the mountains and the waves below. Or if that's a bit too much, take a hike in the rainforest in **Tijuca National Park,** or stroll amid the stately palm trees in the **Jardim Botânico.** In the evening, stroll the walkway round the edge of the **Lagoa.** Have a snack, a beer, or dinner at one of the many kiosks. Find a kiosk with a band and enjoy the music and the prime people-watching.

IF YOU HAVE 4 DAYS OR MORE Take Marcelo Armstrong's **Favela Tour** through the huge and hidden neighborhood of **Rocinha.** Or check out the sights in **Niterói** across the bay. Try some extreme sports, like **rappelling** or **rafting.** Or take a gentle tour down the coast to the **Museu Casa do Pontal** and **Grumari beach.** If you've got several days to spare, go inland to the summer capital of **Petrópolis,** or the pretty historical cities of **Paraty** or **Ouro Prêto** and **Mariana.** Or else head up the coast to **Búzios** and do some **scuba diving** or just hang out on the long white **ocean beaches.** Lord knows, you could even spend more time on the beach in Rio.

2 The Top Attractions

CENTRO

Ilha Fiscal ★★ This little blue-green ceramic castle afloat on its own island in the bay off Praça XV looks like the dwelling place of a


Biblioteca Nacional 4
Centro Cultural do Banco do Brasil 12
Espaço Cultural da Marinha 14
Ilha Fiscal 15
Metropolitan Cathedral 3
Ministerio da Fazenda 8
Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM) 6
Museu Histórico Nacional 9
Museu Nacional de Belas Artes 5
Nossa Senhora de Candelaria 13
Paço Imperial 10
Palácio Gustavo Capanema 7
Palácio Itamaraty 1
Palácio Tiradentes 11
Royal Portuguese Reading Room 2
Sambódromo (See "Samba Parade Grounds" map)
Central Station (Central do Brasil Railway)
Praça da República (Campo de Santana)
Praça Cruz Vermelha
Itamaraty Palace
Praça Tiradentes
LAPA
San Sebastião Cathedral
CENTRO
Largo do São Francisco
Morro da Conceição
CARIOCA
CINELÂNDIA
Praça Mahatma Ghandi
CASTELO
Praça XV de Novembro
Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM)
Museu Histórico Nacional
Ferry Terminal
Guanabara Bay
Cobras Island
Fiscal Island (Ilha Fiscal)
SANTOS DUMONT AIRPORT
Maracanã Stadium
Area of detail
LEBLON
JARDIM BOTÂNICO
Corcovado
IPANEMA
Sambódromo
BOTAFOGO
COPACABANA
CATETE
CENTRO
FLAMENGO
ATLANTIC OCEAN
URCA
Sugarloaf
Airport
Subway Station
Street Car
0 1/4 mi
0 0.25 km

fair elfin princess, but in fact was built as the headquarters for the Brazilian Customs Service. Initially a rather prosaic building was planned, but Emperor Pedro II intervened, demanding that the gem of a site be given a jewel box of a building. Designer Adolpho Del-Vecchio complied, making charming use of the Gothic Revival then sweeping Europe. Much of the interior of this gorgeous building is taken up by a small museum on the Brazilian navy (it *is* their island). The tour lasts about 2½ hours. On weekdays, tour goers travel to the island by boat, whereas on weekends the trip is by bus along a causeway.

The navy also offers a separate 90-minute boat tour of four small islands bristling with destroyers, aircraft carriers, and lots more military hardware. The voyage to Ilha Fiscal, Ilha das Cobras, Ilha dos Enxadas, and Ilha Villagagnon takes place aboard a World War I–era tugboat.

Av. Alfredo Agache s/n. Centro (behind Praça XV). ✆ **021/2104-6992.** Admission R$8 (US$4/£2) adults, R$4 (US$2/£1) children 12 and under. Guided tours only. Departures Thurs–Sun. Boat tours depart at 1:15pm and 3:15pm; visits to the Ilha Fiscal depart at 1pm, 2:30pm, and 4pm. Closed statutory holidays. Call to confirm hours at ✆ 021/2233-9165. Bus: 119 or 415 (Praça XV).

Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM) ★★ Located in the waterfront Flamengo park, the MAM is a long, large, rectangular building lofted off the ground by an arcade of concrete struts, giving the structure the appearance of an airplane wing. Inside, like the arches of a Gothic cathedral, the concrete struts do all the load-bearing work, allowing for walls of solid plate glass that welcome views of both city and sea. The structure also provides a vast interior display area free of pillars and other obstructions. Displays change constantly—check the website to see what's on—but at all times the MAM presents the best of what's happening in Brazil and Latin America, as well as providing a temporary home to big traveling international exhibits. Signage—a rare bonus—is in both English and Portuguese. The MAM also has a cafe, a bookstore, and a film archive containing over 20,000 Brazilian titles. Allow an hour to 90 minutes.

Tip: Have a look at the garden from the second-floor patio: The lawn, wavy shapes included, is the work of Brazil's great landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx.

Av. Infante Dom Henrique 85, Parque do Flamengo (Aterro), Centro. ✆ **021/2240-4944.** www.mamrio.com.br. Admission R$5 (US$2.50/£1.35) adults, R$2 (US$1/£.50) students and seniors, free for children 12 and under. Tues–Fri noon–6pm; Sat–Sun noon–7pm. Metrô: Cinelândia. Bus: 472 or 125 (get off at Av. Beira Mar by the museum's footbridge).

Museu Histórico Nacional ★★ The place for anyone looking for a good overview of Brazilian history from Cabral's arrival in 1500 to the present. Housed in the former national armory, the National History Museum features seven permanent exhibits on themes such as early exploration, coffee plantations, and modernism, each of which is illustrated with abundant maps and artifacts. Even better, much of the Portuguese signage comes with often very opinionated English translation. Keep in mind that Brazilian museums haven't bought into the "interactive learning" idea. Instead, displays consist of glass cases and explanatory text. They're carefully curated—one case shows a mattock used in an 18th-century peasant rebellion juxtaposed with a bright red banner of the modern Sem-Terra movement, a telling evocation of the land distribution problem that has plagued the Brazilian countryside for 400 years and counting. Allow 2 hours (longer if you're a serious history buff).

Praça Marechal Âncora s/n. ✆ **021/2550-9224.** www.museuhistoriconacional.com.br. Admission R$6 (US$3/£1.50) adults, R$3 (US$1.50/£1) seniors and children 12 and under. Tues–Fri 10am–5:30pm; Sat–Sun 2–6pm. Bus: 119 or 415 (10-min. walk from the Praça XV).

Museu Nacional de Belas Artes ★ A classic museum in the European tradition, the Museu Nacional de Belas Artes houses a vast collection of European and Brazilian art, with an emphasis on 18th- and 19th-century European work. The building, built in 1908, is worth a visit by itself. Though the layout is confusing, the art itself is beautifully displayed. The museum has two galleries of Brazilian art. The highlight is the collection by Frans Post, Brazil's first landscape painter, which is displayed with other works from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The gallery is undergoing extensive renovations and parts of the museum may not be open for viewing. Also worthwhile is the beautiful collection of Italian baroque paintings, some brought to Brazil in 1808 by the fleeing Portuguese King João VI. The center rooms are used for temporary exhibits of Brazilian artists. Allow an hour.

Av. Rio Branco 199, Centro. ✆ **021/2240-0068.** www.mnba.gov.br. Free admission. Tues–Fri 10am–6pm; Sat–Sun 2–6pm. Metrô: Cinelândia.

Paço Imperial ★ For 155 years this was the administrative nerve center of Brazil, serving as the governor's palace and then as the home and office of Brazil's emperors from 1808 until the fall of the monarchy in 1888. It's a pleasingly simple structure, long, low, and rectangular, its many high-ceilinged rooms arranged around a pair of cool interior courtyards. Nowadays it serves as an exhibition hall for traveling cultural exhibits, some of which are excellent, but most of

which, alas, are in Portuguese only. Still, it's an extremely pleasant and interesting building to walk through. A room on the ground floor charts the history of the palace, with maps, paintings, and engravings. Allow about an hour. The cafe in the courtyard on the ground floor is a great place to take refuge on hot afternoons in Rio (open the same hours as the museum).

Praça XV 48, Centro. ✆ **021/2533-4407.** www.pacoimperial.com.br. Free admission. Tues–Sun noon–6pm. Bus: 119 or 415 (and many others).

SANTA TERESA

Tip: Visitors to Santa Teresa should stop by the **Santa Teresa Visitor Information Center** (✆ **021/2509-6875** or 021/9858-6875; www.santateresatour.com), located next to the movie theater in the Largo dos Guimarães, the neighborhood's main square.

The info center offers a variety of information on Santa Teresa, including sights, accommodations, dining, and local artists. A daily 3-hour walking tour departs from here—R$75 (US$38/£20) per person, including pickup/drop-off at your hotel. Call ahead to arrange a specialized tour of the many artists' studios in the neighborhood.

Museu Chácara do Céu ★★ A wealthy man with eclectic tastes, Raymundo Castro Maya had this mansion built in the hills of Santa Teresa, then filled it with all manner of paintings, pottery, and sculpture. The house itself is a charmer, a stylish melding of hillside and structure that evokes Frank Lloyd Wright's work in the American West. The views from the garden are fabulous. Inside, you get a glimpse into the eccentric mind of the collector. Castro Mayo seems to have had three chief interests—European painters (Impressionists like Monet and Matisse, and more daring stuff like Picasso and Dalí); Brazilian art, particularly 19th-century landscapes; and Chinese pottery. He also seems to have felt some kinship between the three. Thus on an upper floor landing do we find a cubist painting by Dutchman Kees Van Dongen next to an 18th-century Brazilian landscape, both of them hung over an antique Chinese vase. See what you think.

Tips Take a Break

The perfect spot for a break in Santa Teresa is the **Jasmim Manga Café,** Largo dos Guimarães 143, Santa Teresa (✆ **021/2242-2605**). This cute courtyard cafe serves outstanding coffees and desserts.

Rua Murtinho Nobre 93, Santa Teresa. ✆ **021/2507-1932.** www.museuscastromaya.com.br. Admission R$3 (US$1.50/£1) adults, free for children under 12. Free admission Wed. Wed–Mon noon–5pm. Tram: Curvelo.

CATETE, GLÓRIA & FLAMENGO

Museu da República—Palácio do Catete ★★ It's gratifying to find a museum that works so hard to grab your interest. Located in a gorgeous baroque palace that from 1897 to 1960 served as the official residence of Brazilian presidents, the three floors of exhibits in this museum try to engage visitors on the history and politics of the Brazilian republic. More traditional displays preserve the air of the palace in its administrative days—a formal ballroom with a long leather-covered table was where the cabinet used to meet (ho-hum). The best—and most biased—exhibit is the three-room hagiography of President Getulio Vargas. It's a curious treatment for this museum, given that Vargas brought the First Republic to an end with a coup in 1930. Still, they do a great job, creating a multimedia sensory experience of Getulio's life and times with audio clips, newsreels, photos, and personal effects. Behind that, in a softly backlit glass case, is the pearl-handled .32-caliber Colt that Getulio used on the night of August 24, 1954, to blast a fatal hole in his heart. Allow an hour to 90 minutes.

The formal gardens surrounding the palace are well worth a walk. There's a cafe in an artificial grotto and a small branch of the wonderful Folklore Museum containing puppets and folk art from around Brazil. Admission is free.

Rua do Catete 153, Catete. ✆ **021/2558-6350.** www.museudarepublica.org.br. Admission R$6 (US$3/£1.50) adults, free for seniors and children 11 and under. Free on Wed and Sun. Tues–Fri noon–5pm; Sat–Sun 2–6pm. Metrô: Catete.

BOTAFOGO & URCA

Museu do Indio ★★ *Kids* Housed in an elegant 19th-century mansion in a quiet part of Botafogo, the Indian Museum's collection is one of the most important in Latin America, with over 14,000 artifacts, 16,000 papers and books on indigenous topics, and over half a million historical documents on Brazilian Indian tribes. All that sounds a little dry, but the museum is anything but. Instead, its exhibits are some of the most innovative and artistic I have come across in a Brazilian museum, including striking wall-size black-and-white photos adorned with colored feathers and a display on kids' toys where the objects dangle from the ceiling at various heights. The symbolism of the hunt is portrayed in a dark room with just a ray of light illuminating the floor, casting an eerie glow on spears and animal

skulls. There are no signs in English, but the exhibits are so vivid they speak for themselves. For kids there is a gallery with (washable) body paint and a large selection of stamps so they can practice adorning themselves as warriors, hunters, chiefs, or shamans. It's a great spot for children and an easy place to spend 2 hours. As a good portion of the displays are outside, avoid going on a rainy day.

Rua das Palmeiras 55, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2286-8899.** www.museudoindio.org.br. R$3 (US$1.50/£1) all ages (free for children in strollers), free on Sun. Tues–Fri 9am–5:30pm; Sat–Sun 1–5pm. Metrô: Botafogo.

Sugarloaf (Pão de Açúcar) ★★★ Along with samba, beaches, and beautiful women, the Sugarloaf remains one of the original and enduring Rio attractions. Deservedly so. Standing on its peak, the entire cidade maravilhosa lays at your feet: the beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana, the favelas of Babylonia, the Tijuca Forest, Christ the Redeemer on his mountain, the Bay of Guanabara, and the fortresses at the edge of far-off Niterói. It's a truly beautiful sight. The cable car leaves every half-hour from 8am to 10pm daily, more frequently if there are enough people waiting. The ascent takes two steps, the first from the ground station in Urca to the 220m (721-ft.) Morro de Urca, the second up to the 396m (1,299-ft.) Sugarloaf itself. Trams are timed so it's next to impossible to make both trips without spending transition time on the Morro, so better to relax and enjoy life. The Morro offers excellent views, as well as a cafe, snack bar, restaurant, souvenir stands, and children's play area.

Tip: If you're feeling active, hike up. The trail is challenging, but oh, the rewards! You start just above the crashing waves, and the views just keep getting better as you go. See "Hiking" under "Outdoor Activities" later in the chapter for details.

Av. Pasteur 520, Urca. ✆ **021/2546-8400.** www.bondinho.com.br. Admission R$35 (US$18/£9.50) adults, R$18 (US$9/£5) children 6–12, free for children under 6. Daily 8am–9pm. Last ride up at 8pm. Metrô: Botofogo, then catch the integração bus marked Urca.

LAGOA

Jardim Botânico ★★ A photograph of the main avenue of the Botanical Gardens—a procession of stately imperial palms punctuated by a splashing classical fountain—graces nearly every tour brochure of Rio. Fortunately, the reality lives up to the photos. In the nearly 2 centuries since Emperor Dom João VI founded the original, the botanical garden has grown to 348 acres and added 6,000 species of tropical plants and trees to its collection. It's now one of the few places near Rio to see standing Brazilwood (Pau Brasil) and other

species from the Atlantic rainforest. Many trees and shrubs are labeled with common and Latin names, but there's not much in the way of explanation (be sure to ask the cashier for a map). Botanical buffs can call the visitor center (see number below) to book a guided tour; English- and Spanish-speaking guides are available. There is no extra cost for the guided tour, it just depends on availability. Most visitors, however, just enjoy the peace and beauty of a meander along the many little paths, garden trails, and greenhouses. The bromeliad and orchid greenhouses are especially nice. My personal favorite was a greenhouse full of tropical carnivores—pitcher plants and Venus flytraps. A cafe and a small bookshop are on-site.

Rua Jardim Botânico 1008. ✆ **021/3874-1808.** www.jbrj.gov.br. Admission R$4 (US$2/£1.10) adults, free for children 7 and under. Daily 8am–5pm. Bus: 170 (from Centro), 571 (from Glória-Botafogo), or 572 (from Zona Sul).

ZONA SUL

Forte de Copacabana ★★ Simply massive. Built on the eve of World War I by the German arms-maker Krupp, Copacabana Fort boasts walls of reinforced concrete 12m (39 ft.) thick. They protect a whacking great cannon (305mm) that could fire a deadly shell 23km (14 miles) out to sea. The army has done an excellent job presenting the interior as it was when it was a working bastion. Rooms contain then-state-of-the-art instruments (lots of brass wheels and finely scaled calipers) for targeting and aiming the great guns. And down in the very bowels of the fort the cannons are still in place. Best of all, the bored soldiers guarding the place never leave the gate, so you're free to touch, fiddle, and play as much as you want. Allow about an hour.

A nuanced evaluation of the army's role in Brazilian history would be a fascinating thing, but you won't find it at the laughable **Army History Museum.** Army history as told here seems to end around 1960, just 4 years before the army (once again) put an end to democracy.

Praça Coronel Eugênio Franco 1, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2521-1032.** Admission R$3 (US$1.50/£1) adults, free for seniors and children 8 and under. Price includes admission to the Army History Museum (see above). Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Bus: 415 to far end of Copacabana Beach.

Forte do Leme ★★★ *Finds* One of Rio's best-kept secrets (even most Cariocas haven't been up here). On the top of the 600-foot granite rock you get a 360-degree view of Copacabana and Guanabara Bay; you can see why the military wants to keep the fort to itself. The main gate is toward the back of the square at the end of Leme beach. Once inside, you make your way up a cobblestone road

Tips Take a Break

The **Café do Forte,** located on the seaside ramparts of the Forte de Copacabana, offers some of the best views in town and then some. Operated by the Confeitaria Colombo, the cafe offers outstanding pastries, cakes, and sandwiches. Open Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 8pm (✆ **021/2247-8994**). To enter you must pay the R$3 (US$1.50/£1) visitor fee at the fort entrance.

that winds around the back of the hill. Even on a hot day the trail stays cool thanks to the surrounding lush forest. Often you can spot squirrel-size sagui monkeys running up and down the power lines. It's only a 20-minute walk to the top and you'll be rewarded with a most splendid view of Copacabana beach and beyond.

Tip: Grab some snacks and drinks from the Zona Sul supermarket in Leme (Av. Atlântica 866) and have a picnic at the top.

Praça Almirante Julio de Noronha s/n, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2275-7696.** Admission R$3 (US$1.50/£1). Sat–Sun 8am–4pm. Metrô: Cardeal Arcoverde/integração bus to Leme or bus 472.

COSME VELHO

Corcovado ★★★ *Kids* The price is a bit steep but then so is the rail line, its narrow gauge winding upward past hillside shacks, through trees and tangled rainforest creepers, up and ever up, yea unto to the very feet of Christ. A stylish Art Deco Christ, 30m (98 ft.) high on a mountaintop 710m (2,329 ft.) above sea level. Recently, the Corcovado was chosen as one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. The view from his toes is definitely worth the money. The mountains, the bay, and the city all lay revealed beneath your feet. It's enough to give you a feeling of omniscience. The statue was originally intended to mark the 100th anniversary of Brazilian independence in 1922, but due to a funding shortfall, it didn't open until 1931. At the peak station there's a small refreshment and souvenir stand, but not much else. A pair of escalators whisks you up to the base of the statue. Allow about 2 hours round-trip, including time spent gazing at the glory that is Rio. Note that touts at the ground station will almost certainly approach you offering a bus trip to the Corcovado plus another viewpoint a little lower down for R$30 (US$15/£8) or whatever price you can bargain with them. Though it's not a bad deal, you do miss out on the nifty train ride.

(Train Station) Rua Cosme Velho 512, Cosme Velho. ✆ **021/2558-1329.** www.corcovado.com.br. Admission R$36 (US$18/£10) adults, R$18 (US$9/£5) children

6–12, free for children 5 and under. Trains going up depart every 30 min. 8:30am–6:30pm daily. Last train down 7:30pm. Bus: 422, 583, or 584 to Cosme Velho.

Museu Internacional de Arte Naif do Brasil ★★ Don't miss the Museu de Arte Naif, located just a few hundred yards from the Corcovado tram station. Sometimes known as primitive or ingénue art, its practitioners paint from the heart, portraying the daily life of common folks. Whatever they may lack of technical skill they more than make up for by the cheerful and expressive drawing and the vibrant use of color. Two of the largest naive art paintings in the world are on display here: one a massive 4×7m (13×23-ft.) picture-postcard view of Rio, the other a mural that in portraying the history of Brazil since 1500 wraps itself around three of the mezzanine walls. The top floor is exclusively reserved for local artists. Visitors will recognize many popular scenes from Cariocas' daily life, such as a Flamengo-Fluminense soccer game at the Maracanã stadium, the samba parade, the beach, and the small neighborhood botequim cafes. Expect to spend 45 minutes.

Rua do Cosme Velho 561, Cosme Velho. ✆ **021/2205-8612.** www.museunaif.com.br. R$6 (US$3/£1.50) adults, R$3 (US$1.50/£1) children (your Corcovado train ticket gives you 50% discount at the museum). Tues–Fri 10am–6pm; Sat–Sun noon–6pm. Bus: 422, 583, or 584 to Cosme Velho.

FARTHER AFIELD

Jardim Zoológico—Rio City Zoo ★ *Kids* If you haven't got time to get to the Amazon, this may be the place to come. Though not huge, the zoo is green, leafy, and pleasant, and has about 2,000 different species on display, most of them Brazilian. It's particularly good for birds. There are toucans (of Fruit Loops cereal fame), macaws, and other colorful tropical species, some in an open aviary so you can walk among them while they fly around. (That doesn't apply to the harpy eagle: the zoo's example of the world's largest raptor sits caged and alone, looking both ominous and forlorn.) The reptile house and primate displays are also quite good. Some displays are inevitably small and cramped, which may produce cries of pity from the environmental activist, but all in all, the zoo does a creditable job reproducing habitats while providing access to the public.

Quinta da Boa Vista s/n, São Cristóvão. ✆ **021/3878-4200.** Admission R$5 (US$2.50/£1.35). Free for children less than 1m (39 in.) tall. Tues–Sun 9am–4:30pm. Bus: 472 or 474.

Museu de Arte Contemporânea—Niterói ★★ Oscar Niemeyer's spaceship design for Niterói's new Contemporary Art Museum has done for this bedroom city what Gehry's Guggenheim did for Bilbao,

Tips Exploring What's Beyond the Saucer

From Niemeyer's saucer-shaped museum, it's only a short stroll to Niterói's main beach, Icarai. The beach itself makes for a pleasant walk and the views of Rio are fabulous. One of Niterói's main shopping streets, Rua Coronel Moreira Cesar, runs parallel to the beach, 1 block up. The stretch between Rua Miguel Frias and Rua Otavio Carneiro is lined with boutiques and *galerias* (small shopping centers). You can take a break at the bakery and restaurant **Confeitaria Beira Mar,** Rua Coronel Moreira Cesar 149, corner of Rua Pres. Backer (✆ **021/2711-1070**). For an excellent kilo lunch try **Buzin,** Rua Pereira da Silva 169 (✆ **021/2711-5208**), just 2 blocks past Rua Colonel Moreira Cesar. To return to the ferryboats, catch any bus on the waterfront that says "*Barcas*." You can also catch a van straight to Ipanema via downtown and Copacabana (R$4/US$2/£1).

Spain: Put it on the map (at least in Brazil). Set atop a promontory with a stunning view of Rio, the all-white flying saucer says clearly yet elegantly that here is a landmark structure. The magic continues inside with an observation gallery following a band of picture windows around the outside circumference, inviting patrons to gaze on Rio, the Sugarloaf, Guanabara Bay, and the city of Niterói itself. As a gallery, however, the museum has drawbacks. Circular buildings are inherently difficult to make functional. Still, curators do their best, bringing in a constantly changing selection of the best of Brazilian contemporary art (think abstract sculpture, textiles, and painting). Even so, one can't help thinking the best piece of work on display is the building itself. Allow about an hour.

Mirante de Boa Viagem s/n, Niterói. ✆ **021/2620-2400.** www.macniteroi.com.br. Admission R$4 (US$2/£1), free for children 7 and under. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. From Praça XV take the ferry to Niterói, then take a short taxi ride along Niterói's waterfront and up the hill to the museum.

Museu Nacional (Quinta da Boa Vista) ★★ This pretty pink baroque palace that was once the home of Brazil's royal family is now home to vast and incredibly varied collection; many items were originally acquired by the Emperor Pedro II and Empress Teresa, who dabbled respectively in botany and archaeology. The grand entrance hall shows many of the more exotic items: mastodon trunks, a saber-tooth tiger skull, the full skeleton of a giant Pleistocene sloth (5m/16

ft. long!), and a monster meteorite cut in cross section so visitors can run their hands across its polished iron-nickel surface. Beyond the main hall the collection becomes more ordered. One vast wing is devoted to the works of man (mostly *homo brazilienses*). On display are dolls dressed in regional costumes, weapons and masks of aboriginal tribes, whips and saddles from interior cowboys, and much more. The other wing attempts to present all of life, beginning with the smallest protozoa. The displays here are old—many seem to date from the '50s—but what makes it worthwhile is the quality of the specimens: pretty corals, a giant crab that looks like a monster from a '50s horror movie, tarantulas in abundance, a vast collection of fish, and stuffed specimens of most of the mammals found in Brazil. A particular gross-out favorite was the protozoa room, chock-full of models and photographs of all the various parasites that feed on human flesh. Signage is in Portuguese, but is not essential to see and enjoy. I spent a good 2 hours here; others less keen on natural history could probably do it in an hour. The grounds are open daily and are a popular weekend destination for families with children.

Quinta da Boa Vista s/n, São Cristóvão. ✆ **021/2568-8262.** Admission R$3 (US$1.50/£1) adults, free for seniors and children 10 and under. Tues–Sun 10am–4pm. The park is open daily from 5am–6pm. Metrô: São Cristóvão or bus 472 or 474.

3 Other Museums & Cultural Centers

CENTRO

Centro Cultural do Banco do Brasil ★ It's worth stepping inside this gorgeous neoclassical building just to gaze up at the soaring domed atrium. Once the HQ of Brazil's national bank, the building was converted in 1989 into one of the city's premier cultural spaces. Inside (in lovely, cool air-conditioning) there's a pleasant cafe on the mezzanine that serves a wonderful afternoon tea (Tues–Sun 3–8pm; R$30/US$15/£8), a small bookstore on the ground floor with an excellent selection of art and architecture books (many in English), several small galleries on higher floors that feature changing exhibits on art and culture, and three theaters. For coin freaks there's also a small permanent exhibit on Brazilian coinage through the centuries. Allow 30 minutes.

Rua Primiero de Março 66, Centro. ✆ **021/3808-2020.** Free admission; theaters or events may charge a separate fee. Tues–Sun 10am–9pm. Bus: 136 or 415.

Espaço Cultural da Marinha *Kids* With a destroyer, a submarine, and some great ship models, the Navy Cultural Center is guaranteed to delight naval and maritime buffs. The display space is

located on the old Customs dock on the waterfront. That means it's narrow and thin, the exhibits extending ever backward to the end of the pier. On display are countless ship models, including a full-size replica of the royal barge and countless small-scale models of everything from the *Golden Hind* to primitive Brazilian sailing rafts. More interesting for nonmodel freaks are the displays on underwater archaeology, including a wide variety of relics—coins, Delft blue china, jewelry—from the 1648 wreck of the *Nossa Senhora do Rosario.* Moored outside the museum are the ***Riachuelo,*** a 1970s-era submarine, and the ***Bauru,*** a small World War II destroyer. Self-guided tours of these ships (also free) run from noon until 5pm. This is also the place from which one departs for tours of **Ilha Fiscal** ★★.

Av. Alfredo Agache s/n, Centro. ✆ **021/2104-6025.** Free admission. Tues–Sun noon–5pm. Bus: 119 or 415 (Praça XV). From Praça XV turn right (north) and walk underneath the elevated freeway for about 100m (328 ft.).

BOTAFOGO

Museu Carmen Miranda ★ If Carmen Miranda could see her museum, she'd roll over in her grave (spilling pineapples and bananas everywhere). A concrete bunker in a postage stamp–size park surrounded by four lanes of traffic hardly seems a fitting tribute to the flamboyant '40s film star. Inside the banana bunker, however, the small collection does a fine job illustrating Carmen Miranda's star appeal. A large number of her publicity photos are on display blown up to near life-size, along with smaller photos showing the story of her life and career, including her 1939 American breakthrough in the Broadway musical *Streets of Paris.* Also on display is the outfit she wore to the 1941 Academy Awards ceremony, as well as jewelry and accessories, including the trademark tall fruit hats. The museum also has a large collection of video documentaries, biographies, the movies she starred in, and a compilation of her songs. The receptionist is delighted to play these for visitors.

Av. Rui Barbosa s/n (across the street from no. 560), Flamengo. ✆ **021/2299-5586.** R$3 (US$1.50/£1) for adults and children over 5, free for seniors and children 5 and under. Tues–Fri 11am–5pm; Sat–Sun 1–5pm. Bus: 172 (from Ipanema or Copacabana) or 433 from Centro.

FARTHER AFIELD

Maracanã Stadium Once the largest soccer stadium in the world and the temple of Brazilian soccer, the Maracanã got off to an inauspicious start at the 1950 World Cup when close to 200,000 spectators in the brand-new stadium saw Brazil lose the cup final to arch-rival Uruguay. (The loss still hurts—if you want to taunt a Brazilian soccer

fan, just mention the 1950 Cup. Fortunately this was only a temporary setback—Brazil went on to win five World Cups.) The best way to experience the Maracanã stadium is with thousands of other fans at one of the big games (see "The *Only* Spectator Sport in Rio," at the end of this chapter). For those who don't have that opportunity or want a behind-the-scenes look, there are guided tours. An English-speaking guide takes visitors through all floors of the stadium, including the dressing rooms, all the while delivering a seemingly endless stream of Brazilian soccer trivia.

Rua Profesor Eurico Rabelo s/n São Cristovão. ✆ **021/2299-2941.** Daily 9am–5pm. No tours during events or games. R$20 (US$10/£5.40), free for children under 12. Metrô: Maracanã. Enter through gate 16.

4 Architectural Highlights

HISTORIC BUILDINGS & MONUMENTS

Rio's a great place for architecture buffs, and an even better place to watch what happens when overconfident urban designers set their hands to the task of urban renewal. For a city so blessed with mountains, ocean, and historical roots several centuries deep, Rio's movers and shakers have suffered from a striking sense of inferiority. As a result, various well-meaning Cariocas have since the early 1900s taken turns ripping out, blowing up, filling in, and generally reconfiguring huge swaths of their city in order to make Rio look more like Paris or Los Angeles or, lately, Miami Beach. The results of these various movements are—for better and worse—now and forever on permanent display.

AROUND CINELÂNDIA

"Rio Civilizes Itself!" Armed with this slogan and a deep envy of what Baron Haussman had done in Paris, engineer-mayor **Pereiro Passos** set to work in 1903, ripping a large swath through Rio's Centro district to create the first of the city's grand boulevards, the **Avenida Central.** So efficient was "Knock-it-down" Passos that the old colonial Rio he set out to demolish can now be found only in the few square blocks around the **Travessa do Commércio** to the north of **Praça XV.** Accessed via the **Arco do Teles**—an arch built in 1790 to allow passage through a commercial building facing the square—it's a charming area of narrow cobblestone streets and gaily painted colonial shops, now much missed by civilized Cariocas.

The boulevard Passos created in its stead, however, was also quite graceful. Now renamed the **Avenida Rio Branco,** it runs from **Praça Mauá** south past the grand neoclassical **Igreja de Nossa Senora da**

Candelaria to what was then the waterfront at the **Avenida Beira Mar.** The four-story Parisian structures that once lined the street are now found only in photographs, replaced by tall and modern office towers. (Rio Branco remains the heart of Rio's financial district.) The best place to witness the handiwork of these turn-of-the-20th-century Parisizers is on the **Praça Floriano,** referred to by most Cariocas by the name of its subway stop, **Cinelândia.** Anchored at the north end by the extravagant Beaux Arts **Teatro Municipal,** and flanked by the equally ornate **Museu de Belas Artes** and neoclassical **Biblioteca Nacional,** the praça beautifully emulates the proportions, the monumentality, and the glorious detail of a classic Parisian square. The Teatro Municipal was in fact explicitly modeled on the Paris Opera House and inaugurated on Bastille Day (July 14), 1909. (Visitors can poke their heads into all of these buildings, but the best place to appreciate the square may well be seated at an outdoor cafe enjoying a nice cold draft.)

AROUND CASTELO

The next stage in urban reform came in the early '20s, when a group encouraged by public health advocate **Oswaldo Cruz** and backed by a development consortium decreed that the hilltop castle south of Praça XV had to go; the 400-year-old castle was a breeding ground, they said, for pox, plague, and other infectious diseases. In 1922, the castle was blown up, the hill leveled and—starting in the early '30s—construction begun on a series of government office towers inspired by the modernist movement then sweeping Europe. The first of these—then the Ministry of Education and Health but now known as the **Palácio Gustavo Capanema** (Rua da Imprensa 16; see "Palaces," below)—listed among its architects nearly all the later greats of Brazilian architecture, including **Lucio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer,** and **Roberto Burle Marx,** with painter **Candido Portinari** thrown in for good measure. International architects sat up and took note; other less avant-garde government departments commissioned architects with different ideologies, resulting in a **War of the Styles** that raged through the remainder of the 1930s. Perhaps the most bombastic counter-volley was the overblown neoclassical **Ministerio da Fazenda** building (Av. Presidente Antônio Carlos at Av. Almirante Barroso). The resulting enclave of office towers, known as Castelo, lies on the patch centered on the **Avenida Presidente Antônio Carlos.** Chiefly of interest to architectural buffs, it should be toured only during office hours.

AROUND CIDADE NOVA

Knock-it-down Passos had nothing on **Getulio Vargas.** On the national scene the Brazilian dictator was creating a new quasi-fascist political structure called the Estado Novo; in his capital city, he set about creating a **Cidade Nova** to match. In 1940, on Vargas's personal order, a monster 12-lane boulevard was cut through the city fabric from the beautiful **N.S. de Candelaria Church** out through the **Campo de Santana** park to the northern edges of downtown. Anchoring this new megaboulevard was the **Central Station** (known officially as the Estação Dom Pedro II, it's worth popping in to see the Art Deco interior), a graceful modern building with a 135m (443-ft.) clock tower that still stands overlooking the city, providing a much-needed reference point in the northern half of downtown. Vargas's plan called for the entire 4km (2½-mile) street to be lined with identical 22-story office blocks. Cariocas, however, seemed to have a limited appetite for Identi-cubes. Only a few were ever built; they can be seen on the block crossed by Rua Uruguaiana. Even 60 years later, much of the rest of this ultra-wide boulevard remains effectively vacant. As a silver lining, however, there was lots of space left for architect Oscar Niemeyer to build the **Sambodromo,** the used-once-a-year permanent Samba Parade Ground. Designed in typically Niemeyer all-concrete style, it stands in the shadow of an elevated freeway, about 1km (½ mile) along Presidente Vargas.

AROUND ATERRO

The next great reconfiguration of Rio came 2 years after the federal capital fled inland to Brasilia. City designers took the huge high hill—**Morro Santo Antônio**—that once dominated the Largo da Carioca, scooped away the earth and dumped it on the beach from Lapa to Flamengo, creating a vast new waterfront park. On the rather raw spot where the hill once stood there arose the innovative cone-shaped **Catedral Metropolitana,** and at the intersection of the new avenidas **República do Chile** and **República do Paraguai,** a trio of towering skyscrapers, the most interesting of which is the "hanging gardens" headquarters of Brazil's state oil company **Petrobras.** On the waterfront park—officially called Parque do Flamengo but most often referred to as Aterro, the Portuguese word for landfill—designers created new gardens and pathways, a new beach, and a pair of modernist monuments: the **MAM** (Modern Art Museum) and the impressive **Monument to the Dead of World War II.** Not incidentally, the park also bears two wide and fast roadways connecting Centro with the fashionable neighborhoods in the Zona Sul.

PALACES

There aren't a lot of true palaces in Rio, for the simple reason that the aristocracy wasn't around long enough to build many. But as if to make up for this lack of palaces, Brazilians have taken to granting any number of grand structures the appellation "palace." The **Palácio Tiradentes,** Av. Presidente Antônio Carlos s/n (✆ **021/2588-1411**), for example, was built in 1926, long after the aristocracy had departed. Located at the back edge of Praça XV, this rather overwrought neoclassical structure was built to serve as the Brazilian Federal Legislature, which up until then had been meeting in an old jailhouse. Four years after its inauguration, dictator Getulio Vargas overthrew the government and turned the palace into his ministry of propaganda. Nowadays the building serves as the legislature for the state of Rio de Janeiro. Visitors can tour the permanent display that runs down the outside corridor of the building, but since the text-heavy exhibit is exclusively in Portuguese, there's probably not much point.

Older and more graceful is the **Palácio Itamaraty** ✪, Rua Marachel Floriano 196, near the Central Station (✆ **021/2253-7691**). Built in the 1850s for a coffee merchant with the rather grand title of Baron de Itamaraty, the charming neoclassical design—the front has pink walls pierced by granite arches—was sold to the new republican government in 1889 and long served as the ministry of foreign affairs. It has since been converted into the Museum of History and Diplomacy, but this is now closed indefinitely *(sem previsão).* However, as one small museum display remains open (again in Portuguese only), you do have an excuse to get past the guard (you have to show ID) and wander back to the gorgeous interior courtyard where two ranks of imperial palms flank a long reflecting pond in which jet-black swans swim round.

The most impressive palace in Rio is actually the most modern. Or rather, capital-M Modern. Located in the city's office district, the **Palácio Gustavo Capanema** ✪, Rua da Imprensa 16 (no phone), was designed and built from 1932 to 1936 by a team of Brazil's top architects, then the best practitioners of modernism in the world. On the team were Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa (the pair who would later design Brasilia), landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, and artist Candido Portinari, who did much of the tile work that covers the buildings. Supervising as design consultant was Swiss über-modernist Le Corbusier. The result can be underwhelming at first, but that's because 70 years later we've seen a lot of things similar.

But when this was built, no one had ever done anything like it. The entire structure has been raised on pilings 40 feet off the ground, creating an open, airy plaza beneath. And unlike later modernists, this team paid attention to the details: The support columns are covered in beautiful marble, the few ground-level walls in intriguing blue-and-white tile—many designed by Portinari. Ordinary people enjoy the open space thus created. Architectural fans can stand and admire this building for hours.

CHURCHES & TEMPLES

Rio is awash with churches, with some 20 in Centro alone. Likely the most impressive church in Rio is **Nossa Senhora de Candelaria** ★★, set on a traffic island of its own at the head of Avenida Presidente Vargas (✆ **021/2233-2324**). Although a church has stood on the spot since the 1680s, the current clean and simple neoclassical design dates from a renovation begun in 1775. Particularly worth noting are the huge and ornate cast-bronze doors, the ceiling panels telling the story of the church, and the two large Art Nouveau lamps on either side of the pulpit; they look like cast-iron Christmas trees. Open Monday through Friday from 8am to 4pm and Saturday through Sunday from 9am to noon.

Worth a visit and much more centrally located is the **Igreja da Ordem Terceira de São Francisco da Penitencia** ★, Largo da Carioca 5 (✆ **021/2262-0197**). Set on a hilltop overlooking Largo da Carioca, this and the Church of Santo Antônio next door form part of the large Franciscan complex in the city center. The São Francisco church is simply outstanding: Interior surfaces are filled with golden carvings and hung with censors of heavy ornate silver. Open Tuesday through Friday 9am to noon and 1 to 4pm.

The most innovative of Rio's significant churches is the **Catedral Metropolitana** ★★, Av. República de Chile 245 (✆ **021/2240-2669**). Some dislike this building, finding its shape disconcerting and its interior dark. I love it. At each of the four cardinal compass points a rectilinear latticework of concrete and stained glass soars upward, tilting inward as it rises. Where they meet at the ceiling there's another stained-glass latticework—a cross—shining softly with light filtered in from the sky. The form is ultimately modern; the feeling is soaring High Gothic. Open daily from 7am to 6pm; Mass is held Monday through Friday at 11am and Sunday at 10am.

Note: The neighborhood around the cathedral is best visited on weekdays. The area can be unsafe on weekends when the streets are deserted.

5 Neighborhoods to Explore

CENTRO ★★

The place where it all began, Rio's **Centro** neighborhood contains most of the city's notable churches, squares, monuments, and museums, as well as the modern office towers where Rio's white-collar elite earn their daily bread. Roughly speaking, Centro stretches from the **Morro de São Bento** in the north to the seaside **Monument to the Dead of World War II** in the south, and from **Praça XV** on the waterfront east more or less to the **Sambodromo.** It's a compact, pleasantly walkable area; crossing from one side of downtown to the other on foot takes no more than 45 minutes.

Rio's (and Centro's) first and most important square is **Praça XV,** located in the center of the city's old waterfront. This is the place where governors and emperors resided, and the site where the Brazilian republic was proclaimed on November 15, 1889. Notable sights around the square include the **Paço Imperial,** the **Palácio Tiradentes,** and, on the north side of the square, the **Arco do Teles.** Walk through this unobtrusive old archway, and you come to a tiny remnant of old colonial Rio, complete with narrow shop fronts and cobblestone streets. The area's main street, the **Travessa do Commércio,** transforms into a lively outdoor patio/pub in the evenings.

Forming the back edge of Praça XV is **Rua Primeiro de Março,** a busy commercial street with a number of churches, including the **Ordem Terceiro do Carmo,** the **Santa Cruz dos Militares,** and near the far end of the street the massive yet lovely **Nossa Senhora de Candelaria.** Continue along Primeiro de Março to the end, and you come to the foot of the hill upon which rests the **São Bento Monastery.** Southward, the Premeiro de Março transforms into **Avenida Presidente Antônio Carlos,** the main street of a not-very-interesting area of government office towers known as **Castelo.**

Continuing west from Praça XV along either the **Rua Ouvidor** or the **Rua Sete de Setembro** takes you to Centro's prime upscale shopping enclave. Its far border is marked (more or less) by the **Avenida Rio Branco.** Created in 1905 as an answer to Paris's Champs-Elysées, Rio Branco is still the city's most desirable commercial address. It runs from the cruise-ship terminal on the **Praça Mauá** southward to the pretty Parisian square known as **Cinelândia.** About halfway along, a block to the east of Rio Branco, lies the large irregular **Largo da Carioca.**

Though not very interesting in itself, the square is useful as a landmark. Above it on a hilltop stands the glorious golden **Igreja de**

Santo Antônio. To the north of the square, from **Rua da Carioca** to the vast, traffic-choked wasteland known on maps as the **Avenida Presidente Vargas,** and from **Avenida Rio Branco** in the east to the **Campo de Santana** park in the west, lies one of Rio's prime walking, shopping, and sightseeing areas. It's an area of narrow, irregular streets, two-story shops, little squares, and charming small churches. Among the chief sights are the **Largo de São Francisco de Paula,** the **Real Gabinete Português (Royal Portuguese Reading Room),** and an old-style tearoom called the **Confeitaria Colombo.** Shopaholics will enjoy the **informal market** centered on the **Uruguaiana** Metrô stop and the bargains to be had elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Looking south, the Largo da Carioca marks the transition from old Rio to new, and from low-rise to high-rise. Toward the east, **Avenida República de Chile** boasts many of the city's most important commercial skyscrapers, including the landmark **Petrobras** building and the distinctive conical ziggurat that is the **Catedral Metropolitana.** Just south of the modern concrete cathedral, the past makes a token resurgence in the form of the **Arcos da Lapa,** a Roman-style aqueduct that now carries trams south from the city center up to the hilltop neighborhood of **Santa Teresa.**

South and west of Largo da Carioca lies **Cinelândia** (officially called **Praça Floriano**), a Parisian city square faithfully reproduced all the way down to the opera house (or **Teatro Municipal,** as its called) and the many sidewalk cafes. Many of the high-rises surrounding the square show the Art Deco and modern touches of buildings from the '30s and '40s. Across from the Teatro stands the lovely neoclassical Biblioteca Nacional. It's worth poking your head in just to see the grand entrance hall with staircases extending up through a lofty atrium five floors high.

South again from Cinelândia, making use of a pedestrian overpass to cross a pair of wide and busy roads, you come to the man-made **Parque do Flamengo;** the chief sights in the park are the **Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM)** and the soaring concrete **Monument to the Dead of World War II.**

LAPA

A tiny, funky little neighborhood once known as the "Montmartre of the Tropics," Lapa is easy to find. It's centered at the **Largo da Lapa** at the foot an old picturesque aqueduct known as the **Arcos da Lapa.** In addition to those two sights, Lapa offers some lovely old colonial buildings and—in recent years—an active nightlife scene.

SANTA TERESA ✪✪

Most hilltop neighborhoods in Rio are favelas—unsanctioned shantytowns. Santa Teresa is anything but—it's a respectable, slightly bohemian neighborhood with a number of sights to lure visitors. Chief among these is the ***bonde,*** the old-fashioned streetcar that whisks passengers from downtown over the **Arcos da Lapa** into Santa Teresa. The main attraction, the **Museu Chácara do Céu** (see "The Top Attractions," earlier in this chapter) is worth a visit, and when you're done, wander the neighborhood enjoying the fabulous views and the mix of modern, colonial, and Art Deco architecture.

Note: The Santa Teresa tram station is not easy to find. It's behind the big "hanging gardens" Petrobras building, on Rua Prof. Lélio Gama, a little street that runs off Rua Senador Dantas. A less charming but certainly more efficient connection is the Metrô/bus integração; take the Santa Teresa bus from the Cinelândia Metrô station (make sure you purchase the Metrô-integração ticket and save the stub to present to the bus driver).

GLÓRIA/CATETE/FLAMENGO ✪

Extending south from the Glória Metrô stop to the top end of Botafogo bay, these three neighborhoods once comprised Rio's toniest residential area—that is, until the tunnel to Copacabana opened in 1922. Recently, however, the area's made a comeback as Carioca yuppies and other urban pioneers have discovered the advantages (high ceilings, huge windows, and so on) of the old 19th-century houses, while residents and visitors alike have realized that thanks to the Metrô, the area is but minutes from both Centro and Copacabana. The main north-south street—known variously as the **Rua da Glória,** the **Rua do Catete,** and the **Rua Marquis de Abrantes**—is well worth an afternoon or evening stroll. Particularly pretty is the **Largo do Machado,** located at the Metrô stop of the same name. For visitors, the chief attractions in this area include the lovely hilltop **Church of Our Lady of Glória,** and the **Catete Park and Palace,** home to the **Museum of the Republic.**

BOTAFOGO

The neighborhood Botafogo reacted to the rise of Copacabana and Ipanema by reinventing itself as a secondary commercial center. Its broad streets contain a number of office high-rises and big retail shopping malls, including the **Shopping Rio Sul,** the first mall to open in the city. The neighborhood is experiencing quite the revival with many new apartments going up and the opening of a several

new movie theaters and restaurants. Botafogo has a couple of worthwhile sights of its own, including the **Villa-Lobos** and **Indian museums** and the bustling food fair and nighttime music-jam in the **Cobal Public Market.**

URCA

Urca is the pretty little neighborhood nestled round the foot of the Pão de Açúcar. Partly residential, partly home to a naval training college, the area was built on a landfill during the 1920s, thus accounting for the Art Deco and modern style of many of the neighborhood's buildings. Architecture aside, for nonresidents the only reason to visit Urca is for the views. The first is from the peak of **Sugarloaf (Pão de Açúcar),** reached by cable car from Urca's Avenida Pasteur. The second view can be enjoyed while strolling the seawall on **Avenida Portugal.** A jutting peninsula, Urca provides an excellent vantage point from which to gaze back at the Rio skyline; its relative isolation makes it safe to stroll blithely along even late at night. The close-up view of the Sugarloaf is without a doubt the best in town.

COPACABANA ★★

Beach! The one word comprises everything there is to say about Copacabana, but then it's a word that contains within it an endless variety of human behavior. Four kilometers (2½ miles) long and bright white, Copacabana beach is the stage upon which people swim, surf, jog, preen, make sand castles, sunbathe, and play volleyball. The broad and beautifully landscaped **Avenida Atlântica** runs along the beach's entire length. Running parallel two streets inland, **Nossa Senhora de Copacabana** is the main shopping and commercial street. These two avenues and their many cross streets contain numerous hotels, restaurants, and bars. For more on Rio's beaches, see "Beaches, Parks & Plazas," below.

IPANEMA ★★

The famous stretch of beach immortalized in Tom Jobim's song "The Girl from Ipanema" nestles in between Copacabana, Leblon, and Lagoa. No more than 8 blocks wide in some areas, it is one of the most coveted residential neighborhoods in all of Rio. Built mostly after Rio's Art Deco boom, there are very few landmark buildings to speak of; most apartment buildings are nondescript, some downright ugly. What Ipanema does offer is great shopping on **Rua Visconde de Pirajá** and its side streets, an excellent nightlife scene, some terrific restaurants, and of course, the beach, the major recreation area for residents and visitors alike. Joggers and walkers

cruise the black-and-white patterned sidewalk every day of the week, but Sunday is the day to see and be seen when the beachside **Avenida Vieira Souto** is closed for traffic and people cycle, inline skate, and scooter along, at all times showing tans and tight form to advantage.

LEBLON ★★

A smaller and, if anything, trendier version of Ipanema, Leblon sits directly to the east of Ipanema; the dividing line is the drainage canal for the Lagoa, now landscaped into a park called the **Jardim de Ala.** The most significant difference between the two neighborhoods is the street names. The beachside avenue in Leblon is known as **Avenida Delfim Moreira,** while the main shopping street is **Avenida General Martin.** Most of the best restaurants cluster around the end of **Avenida Ataulfo de Paiva** where it meets **Rua Dias Ferreira.**

LAGOA

Lagoa is an odd neighborhood, as the focus is the big lagoon **(Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas)** that drains into the ocean between Ipanema and Leblon. For the majority of Cariocas, this is primarily a recreation area. They come to walk, cycle, inline skate, or run the 8.5km (5¼-mile) pathway that circles the lagoon. In the afternoon and evening, the neighborhood's pleasures become more hedonistic as people come to the many waterside kiosks to grab a drink, have some food, or listen to live music.

BARRA DE TIJUCA

The Brazilian envy of things American has finally expressed itself in architecture. Though ostensibly part of Rio de Janeiro, Barra (as it's usually called) looks and feels much like an American beach city, like L.A. or Miami Beach. Streets are wide and filled with 4×4s because in Barra—as in L.A.—only somebody who's a nobody walks. Instead, folks here drive—to the beach, to their penthouse apartment, or to the full-size replica of Studio 54 at the **American Center** mall.

TIJUCA NATIONAL PARK

Backstopping all of these Zona Sul neighborhoods is the massive **Tijuca National Park.** Mostly mountainous, the 3,300-hectare (8,151-acre) forest was begun in the 1800s as a personal project of the Emperor Dom Pedro II. It's invariably shown on maps as one big swatch of green, but in fact any number of shantytowns (favelas in Portuguese) have taken over parkland, usually in areas adjacent to official city neighborhoods. The park that's left—and there's lots of it—is cut through with excellent walking and hiking trails, many

leading to peaks with fabulous views. Climb to the top of the Pico da Tijuca at 1,022m (3,352 ft.) on a sunny day, and beneath your feet you'll have a view of every neighborhood in Rio.

6 Beaches, Parks & Plazas

BEACHES

Beaches are to Rio what cafes are to Paris. And while each beach has its own particular traits, there are some general rules to help you take the waters like a true Carioca.

BE PREPARED First and foremost: **Get a Brazilian bikini** (though perhaps not if you're male). No matter how funky or fashionably teeny your swimsuit looked up north, on a Rio beach it's guaranteed to scream *gringo.* And if you're thinking the figure's not quite bikini-ready, relax. In Brazil everybody and their grandma wears a two-piece. (***Note:*** However, that no matter how small they may shrink that top, Brazilian women *never* go topless—that's for the heathen French.)

Second: **Don't be a pack rat.** If you carefully observe your fellow beachgoers you'll note that Brazilians bring neither picnic basket, nor backpack full of stuff and gadgets. Why would you bring when everything you could possibly desire is for sale on the beach? Blankets, inflatable mattresses, and quilts are likewise no-nos. A foldable beach chair is acceptable for women; Brazilian men stand or sit on the sand. Parasols are for little kids. All you really need is a towel, sunscreen, and a little bit of cash for beer, food, and other incidentals. Third and most important: **Relax.** Go for a little swim, chat with the one that brung ya or the cutie on the towel next door, have a beer and some snacks, and soak up those rays.

WATER CONDITIONS The beaches facing Guanabara Bay (primarily Flamengo and Botafogo) are nearly always too polluted for swimming. Thanks to a substantial current, the ocean beaches (Copacabana, Ipanema, and Barra) are much cleaner, but even so, sometimes after a heavy rain the fecal coli form count rises beyond acceptable levels. The newspaper *Globo* prints a daily beach report listing all beach closings. Consult that or ask at your hotel.

SAFETY ISSUES Another argument for traveling light to the beach is security. It's unlikely you will get mugged on a Rio beach in the daytime, but leaving that Discman, wallet, or pocket camera on the sand while you head off for a swim *is* an open invitation for someone to relieve you of your valuables. And I would advise against

any moonlit beach strolls. At night the wide beach is dark and deserted; if you want waterfront views stick to the large sidewalk fronting the beach—it's well lit and patrolled by the tourist police.

THE BEACHES **Botafogo** and **Flamengo** are fine and picturesque for an afternoon stroll, but too polluted for swimming. Off by itself out in Urca, **Praia Vermelha** ✪ faces out toward the ocean and is often fine. In addition to a fabulous view of the Sugarloaf, this beach is relatively unfrequented, especially by tourists. On the other hand, it's almost completely lacking in waves.

The first of the ocean beaches to see development back in the '20s, **Copacabana** ✪✪ remains a favorite. The wide and beautifully landscaped Avenida Atlântica is a great place for a stroll. (The wavy landscaped sidewalk mosaic is the work of landscape designer Roberto Burle Marx.) When the feet start to tire, pull up a chair at any of the countless beachside kiosks, grab a chilled coconut or a *cerveja,* and spend some time admiring the picture-perfect view. The area at the far end of the beach near the Forte de Copacabana is where fishermen beach their small craft; it's a good place to wander if you want freshly grilled shrimp or other seafood. For those with other fish to fry, the area in front of the Copacabana Palace around the Rainbow kiosk is a well-known gay area.

The *postos* (lifeguard stations) along Copacabana and Ipanema beaches are open daily from 8am to 8pm. They offer first aid (free if needed) and changing and toilet facilities for a charge of R$1 (US40¢/£.20). Postos are numbered 1 through 11 starting from Leme and ending in Leblon. Cariocas will often use them as a reference point instead of the cross streets.

Ipanema Beach ✪✪✪ was famous among Brazilians even before Tom Jobim wrote his famous song about the tall and tan and young and lovely girl he saw and sighed over. Stretching almost 3km (2 miles) from the foot of the Pedra Dois Irmãos to the Ponta Arpoador, the beach at Ipanema is a strand like nowhere else. Part of the attraction does involve observing the self-confident sensuality with which the Ipanema *garotas* (girls) stroll the sands. (Equal-opportunity purists should note that there's an equivalent amount of male beefcake on hand—it just doesn't inspire songs or poetry.) But more than anything, Ipanema is a carnival. Watch the games of volleyball or *footvollei* (like volleyball, but no hands allowed), beach soccer, surfing, and wakeboarding. Forgot your bikini? Wait a moment and a vendor will stop by with one for sale—along with towels, sarongs (called *kangas* in Brazil), hats, shades, peanuts, beer, cookies, Walkmans, suntan

lotion, Styrofoam airplanes, Winnie-the-Pooh books, sticks of grilled shrimp, shelled coconuts, even deep-muscle massages. Claim a piece of sand on Ipanema, and all of life's essentials will come to you.

The section just around the point from Copacabana—called **Praia do Arpoador**—is a prime surf spot and a great location for watching the local dudes take to the waves. One of the surf schools also runs lessons for kids from the local favelas. The area around Posto 8 (opposite Rua Farme Amoedo) is Ipanema's gay section.

Farther down into **Leblon** (still the same beach, just a different name once you cross the canal) you will find the **Baixo Baby.** This play area, equipped by corporate sponsors with lots of playground equipment and beach toys, is a popular gathering place for nannies and parents to watch their kids run around and do what kids do on a beach, play with sand.

Off on its own surrounded by mountains, **São Conrado Beach** offers some fine scenery and a (relative) sense of isolation. Its other main claim to fame is as a landing strip for all the hang gliders (*asa delta* in Portuguese) who leap from nearby peaks.

Farther from the city is the beach at **Barra de Tijuca.** The only reason to go out here is if you're a surf-head desperate for a wave. The surfing is said to be the best in Rio, particularly around the Barraca de Pepê (Pepê's Shack) where surfers like to gather. The only reason to go even farther beyond Barra is to get to Grumari, a lovely small beach set in a nature reserve. Grumari has no high-rises or beachside restaurants, just lush vegetation and a few kiosks by the side of the road. However, don't expect to get away from the crowds even this far out; especially on weekends the place is packed.

PARKS & GARDENS

In addition to numerous beaches, Rio is also blessed with a variety of parks. On the waterfront near Centro there's **Flamengo Park,** a good place to stroll in the late afternoon if you're looking for a nice view of the Sugarloaf.

Out in the other direction, just past the northern edge of downtown, lies the **Quinta da Boa Vista,** the royal family's former country residence, on Avenida Bartolomeu de Gusmã, just a short walk from the Sao Cristóvão Metrô stop. Though it's been a century or more since the exiled royals departed, their former country residence is as delightful now as it was when the royal princesses scampered round the villa gardens. Designed in the Romantic style by French landscape architect Auguste Glaziou, the Quinta da Boa Vista has all

the tricks of the gardener's trade: tree-lined dells, small ponds and waterfalls, a grotto, a lookout, even a temple of Apollo. The park is also home to the city zoo and the national museum (see "The Top Attractions," earlier in this chapter). Open daily from 7am to 6pm.

Closer to the city core lies the **Campo de Santana,** opposite the Central Metrô stop on Avenida Presidente Vargas. A pretty, formal park, its fence, and four iron gates protect 50 species of trees, four ponds, and a grotto. The fence also encloses numerous *agoutis* (a bizarre-looking mini-capybara), ducks, peacocks, and marmosets, as well as a large collection of stray cats that Cariocas seem to dump here. Open daily from 7am to 7pm.

Last and best, the **Parque Nacional da Tijuca (Tijuca National Park)** ★★ is a wonder. At more than 8,000 acres it's the biggest urban forest in the world and one of the last remnants of Atlantic rainforest on Brazil's southern coast. It's a great place to go for a hike (see "Outdoor Activities," later in this chapter), splash in a waterfall, or admire the view (see "Where to Go for Spectacular—and Free—Views," below). Among its more special points are the Pico de Tijuca, the Corcovado, the Vista Chinesa, and the Pedra da Gávea.

SQUARES & PLAZAS

What's the difference between a *largo* and a *praça?* Simple, although not really. A *praça* is a city square, and a *largo* is, well, also a city square except a *largo* is always bigger than a *praça,* except—like with the Largo de Boticario—when it isn't.

Tucked away just a few hundred meters uphill along Rua Cosme Velho from the Corcovado Train Station is one of Rio's prettiest squares, the **Largo de Boticario** ★★, named for the druggist Luis da Silva Souto who settled there in 1831 (*boticario* is an old-fashioned Portuguese word for druggist). It's a gem of a spot, with five gaily painted colonial houses encircling a fountain in the middle of a flagstone square. Mature fig trees overhead make for abundant shade, while traffic noise seems completely drowned out by the soft gurgling of the Rio Carioca (from which residents of Rio derive their nickname) taking its last few breaths of air before disappearing forever beneath the city streets. Calm and picturesque, it's well worth the 5-minute detour if you're going to the Corcovado anyway.

The best way to arrive in **Praça XV de Novembro** is by sea—if not on a sailing ship from Portugal then a ferry from Niterói will do the trick. Rio's most important square, Praça XV is also its most abused. Earlier generations of city planners took this main ceremonial square, ran six lanes of traffic in front of it, a freeway over the

Moments Where to Go for Spectacular—and Free—Views

Rio's best two views—from the **Sugarloaf** and the **Corcovado**—are both ticket-charging attractions. But in a city with so much geography it's impossible to fence off everything. What follows are views you get for free.

Smack in the middle of Botafogo is the **Mirante do Pasmado.** It is walkable (enter off Rua General Severino, close to the Shopping Rio Plaza), although it would probably take you at least 30 minutes. A lot easier is to take a taxi up and then walk back down. The views of Sugarloaf, the bay, and the Christ are quite spectacular. At night, there are a few *barracas* (kiosks) where Cariocas like to go after a night of clubbing. Another great viewpoint can be found in Leblon.

Just a short 3km (2-mile) drive uphill along Estrada da Canoa from the beach at Sao Conrado, the **Canoas Lookout (Mirante de Canoas)** provides a view of São Conrado, Rocinha, and the Pedra Dois Irmaos near Leblon, and looking back uphill, the 640 meter (2,100-foot) **Pedra Bonita** from whence the hang gliders launch. Carry on up the road for 2km (1¼ miles), then turn left on Caminho da Pedra Bonita, and you too can stand by the hang gliders as they launch.

The military fort in Leme (see **Forte do Leme,** p. 83) offers the most spectacular views of Copacabana, the Bay of Guanabara, and Sugarloaf. At R$3 (US$1.50/£1), it's effectively free.

top of it, then knocked down most of the old structures used to frame the space, and erected 20-story glass blocks. Still, some of the old charm shines through (and six lanes of traffic have been sunk in an underground tunnel, which helps). To your right as you arrive, beyond a statue of Dom João VI on a horse, is the **Chafariz do Mestre Valentim,** an ornate fountain that marks Rio's former coastline.

Perhaps the city's prettiest square (next to Cinelândia) is the **Largo do Machado** in the Catete neighborhood. Perfectly proportioned, the square is dominated by the **Igreja Matriz de Nossa Senhora da Glória,** a strange but rather elegant combination of traditional Greek

temple and a three-story bell tower. As an added bonus, there's a number of Parisian-style sidewalk cafes on the square's northern flank.

Also well worth a visit is the **Largo de São Francisco de Paula** in Rio's old shopping district. There's an outdoor market on one side of the square, and on the other the huge baroque-style **Igreja de São Francisco de Paula.**

For a further discussion on the city's best squares and plazas, see "Neighborhoods to Explore," earlier in this chapter.

7 Especially for Kids

There are few things in Rio that *aren't* for kids. Brazilians take their children everywhere—restaurants, bars, even dances—and voice no objection when others do the same. Still, there are few places that stand out as being especially kid-friendly. First and most obvious is the **beach.** Sun, surf, and sand castles have kind of an enduring kid appeal. For younger children the beach at **Leblon** features the **Baixo Baby,** a free play area equipped with all manner of toys and play stuff geared for toddlers. On Sundays and holidays, the waterfront avenues that line the beaches of Flamengo, Copacabana, Ipanema, and Leblon are closed for cars. With no traffic, the miles and miles of waterfront become the world's best playground. Both adults and children will enjoy the pleasant bustle of Carioca families going for a stroll, and there's plenty of entertainment to boot. You'll find an array of buskers such as jugglers, magicians, musicians, stilt-walkers, and fire-eaters, as well bike rentals and small electric toy-car rentals. For slightly older kids, the **city zoo** (**Jardim Zoológico**—see "The Top Attractions," earlier in this chapter) is guaranteed to delight and just possibly to educate. One of the few museums of interest to kids is the **Museu do Indio** (see "The Top Attractions," earlier in this

Tips DIY When It Comes to Tours

When booking a tour or outdoor adventure, it's best to make the call yourself. (Don't worry about a language barrier; most tour operators speak English.) The concierges and desk staff in most hotels are remarkably mercenary. If they make the booking it will cost you anything from 10% to 50% more. Nor will you necessarily get the tour you want. Rio concierges are notorious for informing guests that a tour they wanted is "full," then putting them on a tour with another company—one that offers the concierge a bigger cut.

chapter) in Botafogo. The museum offers kids stamps and (washable) body paints so they can practice adorning themselves like natives; the re-creations of Indian houses on the grounds are fun places to crawl in and out of. In Catete, the beautiful (if slightly formal) **Parque do Catete** has a ***brinquedoteca,*** a kind of toy library from which you can borrow toys by the hour for a nominal fee (about R$7/US$3.50/£2 per hour). Few kids can resist the fun of a train—or tram ride. The Santa Teresa tram zooms over a high aqueduct, then snakes through the narrow streets of this old neighborhood. At the top station, hop off, and make your way over to the **Ruin Park** (see "Suggested Rio de Janeiro Itineraries," above), the shell of an old mansion featuring numerous stairs, a tower, and catwalks to run up, down, and around on. The bonus for parents is the fabulous view of Rio.

8 Organized Tours

BUS TOURS **Gray Line** (✆ **021/2512-9919;** www.grayline.com) offers a number of tour itineraries: the R$65 (US$33/£18) tour of Rio's historic downtown and the R$65 (US$33/£18) boat tour of Guanabara Bay are reasonable value; the R$80 (US$40/£22) half-day tour (morning or afternoon) of the Corcovado or Pão de Açúcar is really a bit of a racket; all they're providing is transfer to and from the train station or gondola at a markup. If your time is limited you can combine several tours and see the Corcovado, Sugarloaf, and historic Rio in one full-day trip for R$190 (US$95/£51), lunch included.

BOAT TOURS **Saveiros Tour** ★ (✆ **021/2225-6064;** www.saveiros.com.br) offers 2-hour tours of Guanabara Bay aboard an old wooden fishing schooner. Cost is R$35 (US$18/£10), children 5 to 10 R$15 (US$7.50/£4), children under 5 free, including snacks of fresh fruit. Departure is at 9:30 or 11am Tuesday through Sunday from the Glória Marina (Metrô: Glória). The tour takes in Ilha Fiscal and the navy yards, has a look at the Sugarloaf from the sea, then treks across the bay to Niterói to look at the huge Fortaleza Santa Cruz, which once guarded the mouth of Guanabara Bay. If you prefer a sunset tour of the bay, contact **Marlin Yacht Charters** (✆ **021/2225-7434**). They offer a daily tour (with a minimum of four people) from 3 to 5pm, taking in the main sights of the Bay such as the Rio-Niterói bridge, the Sugarloaf, and the beaches and fort on the Niterói side, across from Rio. Boats depart from the Glória Marina. Confirm reservations until 1pm

for same-day departures. Adults and children 8 and over R$40 (US$20/£11). Children under 8 go half price or free (depending on your negotiation skills).

HELICOPTER TOURS Rio is a town where taking the high ground is rewarded. **Helisight** (✆ **021/2511-2141,** on weekends 021/2542-7895; www.helisight.com.br) offers sightseeing tours by helicopter. Prices range from R$150 (US$75/£41) per person for a 6-minute circuit around the statue of Christ to R$300 (US$150/£81) per person for a 12-minute flight over the Christ, Botanical Gardens, Rocinha, Lagoa, Leblon, Ipanema, Copacabana, and the Sugarloaf. There's a minimum of three people per flight. Tours depart from Urca Hill (halfway up to the Sugarloaf) and from the shore of Lagoa (opposite the rowing stadium in Leblon).

SPECIALTY TOURS Rio's hillside favelas, or shantytowns, are huge, complex, and fascinating—a whole other world, in fact—but as an outsider it's difficult (and dangerous) to navigate your way through this world. Licensed guide Marcelo Armstrong of **Marcelo Armstrong's Favela Tour** ★ (✆ **021/9989-0074** mobile, or 021/3322-2727; www.favelatour.com.br) knows the territory; he's been doing tours since 1993, longer than any of his competitors. A 3-hour tour costs R$70 (US$35/£19) if booked directly, including pickup and drop-off. A portion of the fee goes to fund a school that tour-goers get to visit. To enjoy some of the city's best hiking trails, book one of the many city nature tours with **Rio Hiking** (✆ **021/2552-9204** or 021/9721-0594; www.riohiking.com.br). Many of the city's trails and viewpoints are hard to access without a car. Rio Hiking's knowledgeable English-speaking guides will take you on some of the best hikes and show you some interesting parts of the city not always explored by visitors. One of the most popular tours is the visit to the Tijuca Forest, which includes all the main sights of the park, a 2-hour hike to the highest peak in the park, and a visit to Santa Teresa for R$170 (US$85/£46) per person for a full day. For a very different tour, experience **Ikoporan**'s community tours (✆ **021/3852-2916;** www.ikoporan.org). This local organization sets up volunteer projects for foreign visitors who would like to help a community organization. Those who don't have the time to dedicate to volunteering can spend a day visiting one or more community projects, getting to know some of the social projects that support some of Rio's most socially disadvantaged groups; learn more about social issues; and talk to staff, volunteers, and local residents. Tours start at

R$140 (US$70/£38) and include transportation, an English-speaking guide, and lunch. Part of the proceeds are donated to the projects.

TRAM TOURS Rio has far more tram track than gets used by the daily tram to and from Santa Teresa. Every Saturday, some of this track gets put to use for a special tram tour. The **tour** departs at 10am and 2pm and runs about 2 hours; tickets are R$4 (US$2/£1). The ride takes you up toward the Dois Irmãos and the forest above Santa Teresa. It's a unique opportunity to see some more of this charming neighborhood and the gorgeous Tijuca forest. For further information call the **Museu do Bonde** (✆ **021/2215-8581**). ***Note:*** The tram station is not at all easy to find. It's behind the big "hanging gardens" Petrobras building, on Rua Prof. Lélio Gama, a little street that runs off Rua Senador Dantas.

9 Outdoor Activities

ADVENTURE SPORTS **Rio Hiking** ★★ (✆ **021/9721-0594;** www.riohiking.com.br) has evolved into Rio's adventure-sport specialist, offering a range of exciting outdoor sports that take full advantage of Rio's extraordinary geography. To date, Rio Hiking offers **rock climbing, rafting, ocean kayaking, cycling, scuba diving, surfing** (with lessons), and **rappelling.** Depending on the sport, half-day adventures cost from R$80 to R$150 (US$40–US$75/£22–£40), full-day adventures from R$150 to R$250 (US$75–US$125/£40–£67), guides and transfer to and from your hotel included. The **white-water rafting** trip takes you to a river about 2 hours north of Rio with Class III (and sometimes Class IV) rapids. The descent takes about 3 hours. Cost is R$190 (US$95/£51). The company also offers 3-day **trekking** trips (see "Trekking," below). **Rio Adventures** (✆ **021/2705-5747** or 021/8204-7559; www.rioadventures.com) offers a couple of 1-day adventure-sport options from Rio. On the **rappelling** trip, you drive past Barra de Tijuca to beautiful Guaratiba, hike for an hour to a cliff overlooking an undeveloped beach, then rappel down a 377m (115-ft.) rock face. Then you hang out, swim for bit, and head back. For a fun outing that's sure to bring out the inner-Tarzan or Jane, try the tree canopy ride in the Tijuca Forest. While safely secured in a harness, you climb 15 to 50 feet above the ground and make your way from tree to tree across swing-bridges, tunnels, and walkways. Minimum age is 12. Cost is R$190 (US$95/£51) per person for two people, including transportation and lunch. With a bigger group the price goes down significantly.

BICYCLING **Rio by Bike** (✆ **021/2247-7269** or 021/9798-1804) offers guided tours of the city as well as bike rentals. The most popular tour goes along the beaches of the Zona Sul and then through the tunnel to Urca and the Flamengo waterfront as far as the Museum of Modern Art (MAM). A visit as far as downtown or Glória can also be arranged, or those who prefer to cycle around the Lagoa can discuss their preferences with the guide. Bicycles for the guided tour cost R$120 (US$60/£32) for up to four people. Those who prefer to explore Rio's waterfront on their own can just rent the bicycles, R$10 (US$5/£3) per hour or R$60 (US$30/£16) for a full day. A refundable deposit of R$50 (US$25/£14) is required to rent the bike.

GOLFING Rio's only public golf course is out in Barra da Tijuca. Golden Green (Av. Conde de Marapendi 2905; ✆ **021/2434-0696**) is a 3-par, 6-hole course located inside a private condominium but open to the public without a membership. Golden Green is open Tuesday to Sunday from 7am to 6pm. Greens fees are R$50 (US$25/£14) Tuesday to Friday and R$60 (US$30/£16) on weekends and holidays. One of the city's best courses (18 holes) is the elegant **Gávea Golf Club,** Estrada da Gávea 800, São Conrado (✆ **021/3332-4141**). However, the club—like virtually every golf course in Brazil—is private. The Copacabana Palace Hotel and the Sheraton Rio Hotel are a few of the hotels that have an arrangement allowing their guests to tee off. If you are a golf fiend, check first with your hotel of choice for privileges.

JEEP TOURS Although we always thought they looked kind of goofy, the open jeep tours are incredibly popular with visitors to Rio. The most popular tours are the ones through the Tijuca Forest combined with a visit to the Corcovado (R$95/US$48/£26 per person). For information and bookings call ✆ **021/9298-3071** mobile, or 021/2484-2279; www.indianajungle.com.br.

HANG GLIDING For a bird's-eye view of Rio's beaches and mountains, check out **Just Fly Rio** ★★ (✆ **021/9985-7540** mobile, or 021/2268-0565; www.justfly.com.br). Flight instructor Paulo Celani used to be an agricultural engineer, until he decided he'd much prefer to fly for a living. That was more than 20 years ago. Since then Paulo has soared in tandem with hundreds of people ages 5 to 85. There's no experience or special skills necessary, aside from a willingness to run off a ramp into the open sky. It's one of the most exciting things you can do in Rio, well worth the R$200 (US$100/£54) per flight, pickup and drop-off included. ***Tip:*** If you are keen on flying, contact Paulo on the day you arrive in Rio. As the activity

is weather dependent (and what may be a great day for the beach may not be the best flying weather), you can let Paulo contact you when flying conditions are best.

HIKING **Rio Hiking** ✰✰ (✆ **021/9721-0594;** www.riohiking.com.br) offers guided hiking trips to most of Rio's peaks. The 4-hour Sugarloaf trip, which includes a short stretch of rock climbing, costs R$120 (US$60/£32). The 6-hour Pedra da Gávea hike offers terrific views, a waterfall in the middle, and an ocean dip at the end. Cost is R$150 (US$75/£40). Less strenuous is the Tijuca Forest tour, which involves a tour of the forest, stops at a waterfall and a couple of lookouts, and a 2-hour hike to Pico de Tijuca. Cost is R$170 (US$85/£46), with the option of returning via the fascinating hilltop neighborhood of Santa Teresa. Guides Denise Werneck and Gabriel Barrouin know Rio well, speak excellent English, and are a delight to be with.

SEA KAYAKING The Bay of Guanabara is perfect for kayaking. The guides at Rio Hiking (✆ **021/9721-0594;** www.riohiking.com.br) organize kayaking tours out of Praia Vermelha in Urca out and around some of the small islands. The fiberglass kayaks aren't quite up to North American quality, but it's nice to be on the water. Cost is R$160 (US$80/£49) for a half-day tour, including transfers, refreshments, and English-speaking guide.

SURFING California's not the only hot surfing spot in the world. Rio has a number of good spots to catch the waves. And if the waves aren't as big as in Hawaii, the water's certainly warmer than Vancouver Island. The surfing beach closest to the main part of Rio is **Arpoador Beach** in Ipanema. Waves are between 1 and 3m (3–10 ft.). São Conrado Beach is off and on. Sometimes there are good 2m (6½-ft.) waves, sometimes it's dead. Out in Barra de Tijuca the main surf beach is **Barra-Meio,** a 1km-long (½-mile) stretch in the middle of the beach (around Av. Sernambetiba 3100). Waves average around 2m (6 ft.). Carry on down that same beach another 6.5 to 8km (4–5 miles), and you come to **Macumba-Pontal,** a 2.5km (1½-mile) beach with waves up to 3m (10 ft.). If you've brought your board and just need transport, there's a **surf bus** that departs the Largo do Machado at 7am, 10am, 1pm, and 4pm and goes along Copacabana, Arpoador, São Conrado, and Barra de Tijuca as far as Prainha, past Recreio. Call to confirm departure times (✆ **021/2539-7555** or 021/8702-2837; www.surfbus.com.br); tickets cost R$3 (US$1.50/£1) each way. If you need a board, **Hot Coast,** Galeria River, Rua

Francisco Otaviano 67, loja 12, Ipanema (✆ **021/2287-9388**), rents short boards, fun boards, and long boards for R$40 (US$20/£11) a day. You need to book ahead if you want a board on the weekend. If you're looking for **lessons** there's a surf school conveniently located in Ipanema. The **Escolinha de Surf Paulo Dolabella** (✆ **021/2259-2320**) is in front of the Caesar Park Hotel. The regular lessons are Tuesday and Thursday from 8 to 10am and 3 to 5pm but you can also arrange for a lesson on the weekends or other days. Drop-in rates are R$30 (US$15/£8) per hour, including the equipment. However, like true surf dudes, they will neither have nor answer phones; you have to go find them. **Riohiking** (**021/9721-0594;** www.riohiking.com.br) also offers a half-day surf lesson and includes transportation, gear, and a lesson, R$150 (US$75/£40).

10 The *Only* Spectator Sport in Rio

***FUTEBOL* AT THE MARACANÃ** ★★★ The best and only true way to experience the world's largest soccer stadium is to come during a big game. What an experience! Fans arrive at Maracanã, Rua Profesor Eurico Rabelo s/n (✆ **021/2569-4916;** Metrô: Maracanã), hours beforehand, literally—for a 4pm game they arrive at 1pm *at the latest*—and the world's biggest party begins. Outside folks drink ice-cold beer. Inside the *torcedores* (fan club members) bring out the samba drums and pound away for a good half-hour, psyching themselves up before parading in the banners—huge flags in team colors—to the wild applause of their fellow fans. Then the other team parades in their flags, and your team boos. Then your side sings a song insulting their team. Then their team sings a song insulting your team. Then they unveil a massive *banderão* covering half the stadium. Then your side unveils your *banderão.* Samba drums beat all the while. Eventually after several hours of this silliness a soccer game breaks out. And the best thing about the Brazilian game is they

Tips Beware of Organized Soccer Fun

Organized trips to the Maracanã are a scam. They often charge R$80 to R$100 (US$40–US$50/£22–£27) for a ticket and bus transport (to a stadium that's on the Metrô line). Even if you took a cab there and back, you'd still come out ahead.

have utter contempt for defense; it's attack, attack, attack for the full 90 minutes. The four best teams in Rio are Flamengo, Fluminense, Botafogo, and Vasco de Gama. Any game pitting one of these teams against another is worth seeing. Scheduling is incredibly complex, but it's guaranteed your hotel clerk (or bellhop) will know about the next big game. Tickets are quite affordable, ranging from R$10 to R$40 (US$5–US$20/£2.50–£10).

Tip: While you can sit in the neutral stands in the middle, it's more fun if you choose sides. Violence at Brazilian football never came anywhere close to the problems seen in Europe; since they prohibited beer inside and reduced the stadium seating capacity, it's vanished almost altogether.

6 Shopping in Rio

If Cariocas had to list their primary joys in life, shopping certainly wouldn't come out on the very top—there are, after all, beaches, music, and sex to consider—but it'd certainly be in the top five. Even on the beach vendors will peddle an enormous range of products. Elsewhere clothing, shoes, arts and crafts, musical instruments, and other souvenirs can all be had at good prices.

1 The Shopping Scene

The old downtown neighborhood of Centro offers great deals for clothes and shoes. Fun to explore are the pedestrian streets around **Rua da Alfândega, Rua Uruguaiana,** and **Rua Buenos Aires,** jam-packed with hundreds of merchants in small shops side by side. Back in the '70s the area was slated to be demolished to make room for a viaduct, but over 1,200 shopkeepers formed a merchant's association and banded together to put a halt to the development. The best days for shopping are Monday through Friday when downtown is full of office workers. Throughout downtown you will also find street vendors hawking a variety of wares, everything from portable radios to pirated CDs and see-through bra-straps. The area around **Largo da Carioca** has a number of market stalls and street vendors. More upscale clothing can be found around the **Rua Gonçalves Dias,** with many stores selling Brazilian brand names and local designers.

Botafogo has two interesting shopping centers, the **Botafogo Praia Shopping** and the older **Rio Sul.** Rio Sul was one of the first malls of Rio and is still a very popular shopping destination. Many Brazilian stores can be found in this mall, and it makes a convenient place to browse and get a sense for brands and prices.

Copacabana, Ipanema, and Leblon don't have any large malls, just boutique malls known as *galerias* in Brazil. The prominent shopping areas are the main streets of the neighborhood. In Copacabana, **Nossa Senhora de Copacabana** is the main shopping street, with the best stores concentrated around the Rua Santa Clara and Rua Figueiredo de Magalhães. The beachfront area also houses a street

market on Saturdays and Sundays, selling souvenirs and arts and crafts from various regions of Brazil. For upscale and exclusive shopping in Ipanema, try **Rua Visconde de Piraja,** especially between the **Rua Anibal de Medonça** and **Rua Vinicius de Moraes.** Another popular destination for Rio's well-heeled shoppers is the classy São Conrado Fashion Mall, located in São Conrado, a neighborhood wedged in between Leblon and Barra. Those who prefer megamalls may want to head straight for Barra da Tijuca. This newly developed neighborhood is home to many malls, including the **Barra Shopping**—the largest mall in Latin America.

Hours for small stores and neighborhood shops are typically Monday through Friday from 10am to 7pm, and 9am to 1pm on Saturday. Malls are usually open from 10am to 10pm Monday through Saturday and limited hours on Sundays (2–8pm). In tourist areas shops will often be open on weekends.

While street vendors and markets take only cash, most shops accept one or more type of credit card. Often you can negotiate a discount for paying cash instead of with a credit card. Sometimes you will see two prices listed on items: *á vista* (always the lower price) refers to cash payments, *cheque ou cartão* is the price for payments made with a check or credit card. Please note that there is a difference between *Credicard* (a brand of credit card) and *cartão* or *cartão de credito* (the generic word for any kind of credit card).

2 Shopping A to Z

ARTS & CRAFTS

Brasil&Cia This store in Ipanema specializes in Brazilian arts and crafts. The items are not cheap but the selection offers quality artwork made from wood, ceramics, paper, and fibers. Look for the collection of ballerina dolls made from gourds and painted in delicate colors and patterns. Rua Maria Quitéria 27, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2267-4603.** www.brasilecia.com.br. Bus: 472.

Pé de Boi In Laranjeiras on your way to the Corcovado, Pé de Boi's collection goes beyond just Brazilian arts and crafts to include work from popular Peruvian, Ecuadorian, and Guatemalan artists. It's also a great spot to browse for arts and crafts from other Brazilian regions such the Amazon, Pernambuco, and Minas Gerais. Rua Ipiranga 55, Laranjeiras. ✆ **021/2285-4395.** www.pedeboi.com.br. Bus: 584.

Trilhos Urbanos A great little store in Santa Teresa, Trilhos Urbanos sells a variety of Brazilian artwork, including paintings, photographs, and crafts made out of tile, paper, and other materials.

Rua Almirante Alexandrino 402, Santa Teresa. ✆ **021/2242-3632.** Tram stop: Largo dos Guimarães.

BEACHWEAR

Blue Man My favorite swimwear store, Blue Man is known for its original designs and prints. Bathing suits and bikinis can be found in various styles, often allowing you to mix and match tops and bottoms for your preferred look. It features some male swim trunks as well. Visconde de Pirajá 351, loja 108, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2247-4905.** Bus: 474. Also with outlets in the Rio Sul and Fashion Mall shopping centers.

Bum Bum The best-known place to shop for the infamous Rio bikini. Collections vary constantly, but one thing never changes—the smaller the better. The styles and colors on display will give you a quick feel for the current beach fashions for both men and women. Rua Vinicius de Morais 130, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2521-1229.** Bus: 415.

Lenny Niemeyer Lenny Niemeyer, or simply Lenny, is quickly becoming one of Brazil's premier beachwear designers. Recently Nicole Kidman ordered several of her pieces after seeing Lenny's collection in *Vanity Fair.* Her collection includes both bikinis and bathing suits, and she recently added bags and accessories. Rua Garcia d'Avila 149, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2227-5537.** Also several other stores, including in the São Conrado Fashion Mall. www.lenny.com.br. Bus: 415.

Rosa Chá Another Brazilian beachwear label that is now available internationally is Rosa Chá. Designs here are intricate and the materials go far beyond plain lycra. The collection also includes a good variety of one-piece suits. Note that this is not the place to come looking for bargains. São Conrado Fashion Mall, Estrada da Gávea 899, shop 221 F, Gávea. ✆ **021/3322-1849.** www.rosacha.com.br. Bus: 593.

BOOKS

Letras e Expressoes The Ipanema store offers an excellent selection of foreign magazines and newspapers. The travel section also offers a number of excellent books on Rio, including some beautiful coffee-table books. Internet terminals are available. The Leblon store also has a decent music collection and excellent coffee shop. Rua Visconde de Pirajá 276, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2521-6110.** Bus: 415. Also at Av. Ataúlfo de Paiva 1292 C, Leblon. ✆ **021/2511-5085.**

Livraria da Travessa With floor-to-ceiling shelves stuffed with books, this store positively invites hours-long browsing sessions. They have a good collection of English books, plus children's books and guidebooks. On the mezzanine there's a cafe that serves coffees, sweets,

sandwiches, and wines. Av. Rio Branco 44, Centro. ✆ **021/2253-8949.** Bus: 128. Also at Rua Visconde de Pirajá 462, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2287-5157.** Bus: 474 or 128.

CARNAVAL COSTUMES

Casa Turuna For those creative types who want to make their own Carnaval costume, Casa Turuna is the supplier of choice. Established in 1920, this store in Rio's downtown sells everything you can imagine; beads, feathers, sequins, fabric, headdresses, and so much more. Rua Senhor dos Passos 122, Centro. ✆ **021/2224-0908.** Metrô: Central.

FASHION

For Men

Sandpiper Trendy casual wear that is a bit upscale but still fun and hip. A great spot for shirts or informal jackets. Like most men's stores in Brazil, they add a few more splashes of color than you may be used to. Rua Santa Clara 75, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2236-7652.** Metrô: Arcoverde.

Siberian For more dressy menswear check out Siberian. The store sells its own label as well as several other Brazilian labels and focuses on quality clothing at still an affordable price. Especially their fall and winter collection sales offer great bargains for those who live in colder climates and want to pick up some cords or long-sleeved shirts. Rua Lauro Muller 116, Shopping Rio Sul, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2543-2881.** Bus: 119 or 415.

Toulon An excellent spot to pick up some smart casual wear. Good-quality jeans, khakis, colorful long-sleeve cotton dress shirts, and T-shirts at reasonable prices. Rua Visconde de Piraja 135, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2247-8716.** www.toulon.com.br. Bus: 474. Also at Av. N.S. de Copacabana 978, lojas B/C, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2247-1051.** Bus: 474.

For Women

Folic Folic sells upscale clothing for women over 30. The clothes are sophisticated and elegant and fit beautifully. The collection ranges from casual, including jeans, to office wear and evening wear. The store will make any adjustments to your purchases for free to ensure the absolutely perfect fit. The March and August sales at Folic are legendary as prices drop up to 70%. N.S de Copacabana 690, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2548-4021.** www.folic.com.br. Bus: 415.

Gang Jeans If you have always wanted to have a curvier behind, then this is the store for you! Vogue magazine described Gang Jeans as "wonderbras for your buttocks." The jeans are incredibly tight but, thanks to a secret formula of fabrics, also very comfortable. Best of all, they are designed to enhance your best asset and boost your confidence. The collection always includes plain styles as well as

some decorated with strass stones or embroidery. Shopping Rio Sul, Rua Lauro Muller 116, second floor, shop 201, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2543-9264.** www.gang-rio.com.br. Bus: 474.

XPTO For young and colorful fashion at very affordable prices, check out XPTO. The collection includes lots of dresses made of excellent quality cotton. Many of the pretty skirts come with matching tops that can be bought separately or mixed and matched with other styles. The clothes at XPTO are playful and fun, but many of the pieces are wearable for all ages. Rua Gonçalves Dias 55, Centro. ✆ **021/2252-3100.** www.xptoonline.com.br. Metrô: Carioca.

GALLERIES

Ateliê Selaron A local artist who works out of his atelier just behind the Sala Cecilia on Lapa Square, Selaron is well known for his paintings and the interesting frames he creates. He is also the artist who created the mosaics on the famous Lapa steps. Escadaria do Convento 24 (enter off the Rua Joaquim Silva), Lapa. ✆ **021/2242-0922.** Metrô: Cinelândia.

Ateliê Tetê Cappel and Eduardo Fallero Studio Smaller is better; this duo has made their fame creating tiny reproductions of well-known landmarks—famous tourist sites, but also small-scale versions of bars, houses, and heritage buildings. Rua Vinicius de Moraes 190, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2522-1141.** Bus: 415.

HB-195 This gallery in Santa Teresa exhibits work from a variety of local contemporary artists. The view you get from this lovely house is just a bonus. Follow the signs for the Chácara do Céu museum, and instead of turning a sharp left on Rua Murtinho Nobre, continue straight ahead for another 20m (67 ft.) to Rua Hermenegildo Barros. Open Wednesday to Sunday 2 to 7pm. Rua Hermenegildo Barros 195, Santa Teresa. ✆ **021/2508-9148.** Tram: Santa Teresa.

GIFTS & SOUVENIRS

Ely's Gems and Souvenirs One of Rio's largest souvenir stores, Ely's offers the typical woodcarvings, Bahian dolls, T-shirts, and mugs, but the good stuff—beautiful creations in silver, gold, and stones—is on the right-hand side, in the jewelry section. Ely herself shows you around. Av. N. S. de Copacabana 249, loja D. ✆ **021/2541-2547.** Metrô: Arcoverde.

Gilson Martins For fun, colorful, and practical souvenirs, check Gilson Martins' collection of bags. That is, bags in the broad sense, which includes purses, backpacks, wallets, and toiletry bags. His

"Brasil" collection is decorated in yellow and green, often with designs of the Brazilian flag. Visconde de Piraja 462, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2227-6178.** www.gilsonmartins.com.br. Bus: 474.

JEWELRY

Amsterdam Sauer The best-known name in Brazil for gems, jewelry, and souvenirs made with semiprecious and precious stones. The Ipanema location houses both the store and museum; it's worth a visit even if you're not looking to buy. The museum shows off many of Mr. Sauer's original finds when he first came to Brazil in 1940 and started working as a miner, gemologist, geologist, and finally as a jeweler. The store offers a wide range of jewelry and loose gemstones including emeralds, aquamarines, imperial topaz (mined only in Brazil), tourmalines, citrines, and Brazilian opals. The staff is friendly and low-pressure. Items can be delivered to your hotel. Rua Visconde de Piraja 484, Ipanema. ✆ **0800/266-092** or 021/2512-9878. www.amsterdamsauer.com. Bus: 474.

H. Stern If you're anywhere near a hotel in Rio, it's only a matter of time before you receive an invitation to visit an H. Stern store, transportation complimentary. The store in Ipanema is the world headquarters. Specializing in precious and semiprecious stones, the company also owns mines and polishing shops, guaranteeing the quality of their products from start to finish. Rua Garcia D'Avila 113, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2259-7442.** www.hstern.net. Bus: 474.

Silvia Blumberg For truly unique designs in gold or silver visit Silvia Blumberg's store in Ipanema. This award-winning designer mostly uses Brazilian stones, but is now developing a collection that combines precious metals with Amazon seeds and nuts. Her creations range from the loud and flamboyant and fun to elegant and discreet. If Silvia's in, you'll get to hear the story behind each of her pieces. Visconde de Pirajá 300, store 214, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2513-4181.** www.silviablumberg.com.br. Bus: 474.

MALLS & SHOPPING CENTERS

Botafogo Praia Shopping The mall's spread out over seven floors, so you spend a lot of time on the escalators, but that's the only drawback. There's an excellent selection of clothing stores, and for your photo needs, the Kodak Rio photo shop on the ground floor. The seventh floor food court has three excellent restaurants (Kotobuki [p. 60], Emporium Pax, and Enseada), with gorgeous views of Botafogo beach and the Pão de Açúcar. Praia de Botafogo 400, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2559-9559.** Bus: 512 (to Alfredo Gomes). Metrô: Botafogo.

Rio Sul One of the most popular malls in the city, Rio Sul is very accessible, located in Botafogo just before the tunnel that goes to Copacabana. With over 450 stores, a movie theater, and an excellent food court, Rio Sul is always busy and a great place to get a feel for Brazilian fashion and prices. Rua Lauro Muller 116, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2545-7200.** Bus: 119 or 474.

São Conrado Fashion Mall The São Conrado Fashion Mall is the favorite haunt for Rio's well-heeled and fashion-conscious shoppers. If you are up on Brazilian movie stars and models this will be the place to spot them! Over 150 stores carry national and international designers. The mall's food court is the best in town with a number of high-end restaurants. Estrada da Gávea 899, São Conrado. ✆ **021/2322-2733.** Bus: 178.

Shopping Leblon Rio's newest mall sits right on the edge of Leblon and Ipanema and offers an elegant shopping experience. The mall offers a good selection of upscale stores and labels but certainly not as high-end as the São Conrado Fashion Mall. The excellent food court has views of the lagoon and the Corcovado. Rua Afrânio de Melo 290, Leblon. ✆ **021/3138-8000.** Bus: 415.

MARKETS

Feira Hippie Ipanema In the '60s this square was the hippie hangout in Rio, and it's still a fun place to browse for arts and crafts. Open every Sunday, rain or shine, 8am to 6pm. Praça General Osorio (intersection of Rua Teixeira de Melo and Rua Visconde de Pirajá). No phone. Bus: 474.

Feirarte If you need to grab some last-minute souvenirs, the two Feirarte markets in Copacabana are ideal. The smaller market operates only on the weekends in front of the Lido park (cross street Rua Rodolfo Dantas). The larger market runs every night from 6pm to 1am on the median, opposite Rua Djalma Ulrich. On offer are the standard array of souvenirs such as T-shirts, jewelry, leatherwork, ceramics, precious stones, bikinis, and paintings. Bus: 119 or 415.

Feira do Rio Antigo (Lapa Antique Market) Every first Saturday of the month, the Rua do Lavradio becomes a large bustling outdoor antique market. Of course an event in Lapa wouldn't be complete without samba, live music performances in the afternoon. Arrive early if you are serious about bargain hunting. Rua do Lavradio, Lapa. Bus: 464.

MUSIC

Modern Sound Music buffs will think they have died and gone to heaven. This store houses an amazing collection of music. The

staff is very knowledgeable and happy to help, but half the fun is browsing through the large wooden CD bins. In the evenings, the store is often used as a small concert venue. To check the programming go to their website and look under *Allegro Bistrô Musical* for details. Rua Barata Ribeiro 502, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2548-5005.** www.modernsound.com.br. Bus: 415.

Toca de Vinicius *Finds* In the heart of Ipanema, this small temple is dedicated to the god of bossa nova, poet and composer Vinicius de Moraes. Anything related to bossa nova can be found in this tiny store: an impressive collection of CDs and vinyl, songbooks, and (mostly Portuguese) books and magazines on the smooth and mellow sounds of Brazil. Rua Vinicius de Moraes 129, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2247-5227.** www.tocadovinicius.com.br. Bus: 474.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The *berimbau,* that wooden string instrument from Bahia, is one of Brazil's most popular souvenirs, but for music lovers there are many more interesting instruments to choose from (most of which are far more portable). The Rua da Carioca has turned into Music Store Central with at least five shops grouped together on its short length. Look for rattles that fit in the palm of your hand, or else pick up a tambourine or small set of drums. The *agôgô* is an interesting-looking double bell used to keep a beat. Guitar players will love the *cavaquinho,* a Brazilian mandolin. It's what gives samba its distinctive twang. For these and more visit **Musical Carioca,** Rua da Carioca 89 (✆ **021/2524-6029**); **Casa Oliveira Musicais,** Rua da Carioca 70 (✆ **021/2252-5636**); or **Guitarra Prata,** Rua da Carioca 37 (✆ **021/2262-9659**). Metrô: Largo da Carioca.

PERFUME

O Boticario A Brazilian success story, O Boticario is known for its fragrances made with flowers and herbs. In recent years the store has branched out (a la The Body Shop) to include skin-care products and makeup, but the most popular items remain the lightly scented perfumes and soaps for men, women, and children. Various locations including Av. Rio Branco 120, loja 48, Centro. ✆ **021/2509-6979.** Metrô: Uruguaiana.

SHOES

Arezzo If Carioca women had to choose a favorite shoe store, it would undoubtedly be Arezzo. This company always seems to stay just a step ahead of the trends without being too avant-garde, and the prices are reasonable. It also sells a great selection of high-quality

leather purses. Various locations, including Rio Sul and Rua Visconde de Pirajá 295, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2521-4737.** Bus: 415.

Constança Bastos Consider yourself a real shoe *connaiseur* if you have already heard of 30-year-old Constança Bastos, the Manolo Blahnik of Brazil. This young designer's shoes are taking the fashion world by storm and are perfect for elegant evening wear. Stars like Charlie Theron and Cameron Diaz have recently worn her creations. Constança's latest project has been the creation of a more affordable, casual label called Peach. Various locations, including the São Conrado Fashion Mall, Estrada da Gávea 899, São Conrado ✆ **021/2422-0355.** www.constancabasto.com.br. Bus: 178. Shopping Leblon, Rua Afrânio de Melo 290, Leblon ✆ **021/2511-8801.** Bus: 415. The Peach label can be found at the Rio Sul, Av. Lauro Muller 116, ✆ **021/2295-5632.** Bus: 119.

Mr. Cat Mr. Cat goes for classic designs, business as well as evening wear, for men and women. All shoes are made of high-quality Brazilian leather. Prices are very reasonable, ranging from R$80 to R$150 (US$40–US$75/£22–£41) for a pair of top-quality leather men's dress shoes. Rua Visconde de Piraja 414, loja D, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2523-4645.** Bus: 474. Another branch at Rua Gonçalves Dias 18, lojas D, E, Centro. ✆ **021/2509-1163.** Metrô: Carioca.

SPORTING GOODS

Galeria River Cool central; not just one shop but a minimall with at least a dozen sports and outdoor stores that sell skateboards, surf gear, inline skates, and climbing equipment as well as accessories such as clothing, sunglasses, and hiking boots. A great place to pick up tips on where to go, lessons, and local hangouts. Galeria River, Rua Francisco Otaviano, Ipanema. No phone. Bus: 128.

SURF SHOPS

Hot Coast One of the few surf stores that stocks rentals, Hot Coast is conveniently close to the best surf spot in Ipanema, Arpoador beach. It's open Monday through Saturday only, so you'll need to book ahead if you want to surf over the weekend. Rentals range from R$20 to R$40 (US$8.40–US$17/£4.20–£8.50) for a short board, fun board, or long board. Galeria River, Rua Francisco Otaviano 67, loja 12, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2287-9388.** Bus: 128.

7

Rio After Dark

It's an open question whether Cariocas possess some hidden nightlife gene or whether they've trained themselves for decadence through years and years of practice. Whatever the case, Rio has a lot to keep you busy at night. It starts early and continues very late. Cariocas themselves don't make a big deal about a night on the town: They're happy either heading out for beers or dancing to forró music or eating shrimp in some hole-in-the-wall botequim. However, if you as a visitor want to go for the quintessential Rio experience, you have to learn to pace yourself. Whether you spend the day seeking out sights or on the beach, head back to your hotel in the afternoon for a wee nap. Trust me, this will be the key to making it through the night. Once you're up again, head out in the cool early evening for a coconut juice on the beach. Sip it while watching the sunset (in summer around 8pm), then around 9pm stroll over to a patio for a predinner drink. On weekends maybe walk along the pathway by the Lagoa and find a table at one of the kiosks. Plan to have dinner around 10pm, to be ready for your evening of dancing around midnight or 1am. (Most places don't even open until 11pm.) Your options at this point depend on the day and the time of year. If you're in Rio between September and Carnaval, attending one of the **samba school rehearsals** on Saturday night is a must. Otherwise, on a Thursday night see who's playing at some of the hip samba spots in Lapa like the **Rio Scenarium, Carioca da Gema,** and the **Centro Cultural Carioca.** Or just enjoy the scene by the Arcos de Lapa on a Friday night. Of course, there are a number of discos and bars to choose from, and then there are always the botequins, Rio's neighborhood bars. Wherever you wind up, after 3 or 4 hours dancing you may find yourself getting peckish. For a late-night or early-morning snack, stop in at the **Pizzeria Guanabara** or **Jobi,** both in Leblon and open until at least 5am on weekends. By the time they throw you out, it'll just be time to wander down to the beach and watch the sunrise, ready for a new morning—and another night—in Rio.

Fun Fact Words to Help You Through the Night

Here's some vocabulary to help you decipher the listings information from the newspapers.

Under *Música* or *Show* you will find the listings for live music. Lovers of Brazilian music should look for anything under *Forró, MPB* (*música popular brasileira*), *Bossa Nova, Choro, Pagode,* or *Samba.* Listings under *Pista* refer to events at nightclubs or discos. Most listings will include the price of admission: *Couvert* is the cover charge and *consumação* states the drink minimum. It is quite common to have two rates, one for women *(mulher)* and one for men *(homem),* the latter usually paying more.

Children's programs are listed under *Infantil* or *Para Crianças.* Please note that many dance clubs offer a matinee program on Saturdays or Sundays for teenagers. The days of the week are given in abbreviations: *seg* or *2a* (Mon), *ter* or *3a* (Tues), *qua* or *4a* (Wed), *qui* or *5a* (Thurs), *sex* or *6a* (Fri), *sab* (Sat), and *dom* (Sun).

To find out more about listings for arts and entertainment, check the Friday editions of the *O Globo, O Dia,* or *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper. Available at all newsstands (buy early in the day, as they sell out quickly), all three publish a detailed weekly calendar of events, including nightlife, performing arts, concerts, and other events in the city. The Rio tourism agency **Riotur** also publishes a detailed booklet of events in English and Portuguese called *Guia do Rio or Rio Guide,* available at its main information center at Av. Princesa Isabel 183 in Copacabana, or call **Alô Rio** at ✆ **021/2542-8080** for information on events around town; they keep an updated list and their staff speak English.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

The performing-arts season in Brazil runs from early April until early December. April is a particularly good time—the equivalent of the Northern Hemisphere's September—as theaters and companies unveil their programs and kick off with their season premieres.

Centro Cultural do Banco do Brasil The two theaters in the center host regular recitals, concerts, and dance performances as well as Portuguese-language theater. There are also regular photography

and art exhibits in the center's small exhibition rooms. Check the website for more information. Rua Primeiro de Março 66, Centro. ✆ **021/3808-2000.** www.cultura-e.com.br. Admission varies from free to R$30 (US$13/£6.50). Exhibits are always free. Metrô: Uruguaina.

Sala Cecelia Meireles This lovely heritage building on the Largo da Lapa is a very popular venue for classical music, offering concerts and recitals. You will often also find more modern Brazilian rhythms such as bossa nova, jazz, and choro. Check the newspaper to find out what is playing. Largo da Lapa 47, Centro. ✆ **021/2224-3913.** www.salaceciliameireles.com.br. Ticket prices R$20–R$80 (US$10–US$40/£5.50–£22). Metrô: Cinelândia.

Teatro Municipal Brazil's prime venue for the performing arts, the elegant Parisian-style Teatro Municipal stages everything from opera to ballet to symphony concerts. The theater's ballet corps and symphony orchestra perform regularly throughout the year, and the theater also hosts many visiting companies. Besides the formal programming, the theater also offers an inexpensive noon-hour opera series *(opera do meio-dia)* and Sunday morning concerts starting at 11am for R$1 (US40¢/£.20)! Check the newspapers for updated programming. Praça Marechal Floriano s/n, Centro. ✆ **021/2299-1633.** www.theatromunicipal.rj.gov.br. Ticket prices range from R$15–R$70 (US$7.50–US$35/£4–£19) on most performances. Metrô: Cinelândia.

Teatro Rival This small theater has just received a major overhaul and is a great venue for seeing local and popular national acts, mostly of MPB. Ticket prices are quite reasonable, so give it a shot. You may often catch some big Brazilian stars such as Fundo de Quintal and Ivan Lins. Rua Alvaro Alvim 33, Centro. ✆ **021/2240-4469.** www.rivalbr.com.br. Ticket prices R$10–R$60 (US$5–US$30/£3–£16). Metrô: Cinelândia.

MUSIC & DANCE CLUBS

Throughout the summer, the city of Rio organizes concerts, outdoor movies, and other events in Copacabana. Check with Alô Rio (✆ **021/2542-8080**) or pick up the event listing *Rio Incomparavel* from Riotur for a complete overview.

In most clubs and discos you can expect to pay a cover charge. Women usually pay less than men; you'll see the two prices listed at the door. Often there is also a drink minimum, which can go up as high as R$120 (US$60/£32) at upscale Ipanema clubs. In most venues you are handed a paper card or electronic swipe card upon entry that is to be used to record all your purchases. The bill is then settled when you leave. A 10% service charge will be included, and a tip on

top of that is not required. Hang on to your card for dear life. If you lose it you'll be charged an astronomical fee.

TRADITIONAL BRAZILIAN MUSIC

Asa Branca The upbeat rhythms and catchy accordion tunes of forró have taken such a strong hold in Rio that even a traditional samba citadel like the Asa Branca—located in the heart of the Lapa nightlife scene—now dedicates most of the week (Wed and Fri–Sun) to forró. Thursday is samba night. The crowd doesn't get going until midnight and dancing lasts until the early hours. Open Wednesday through Sunday after 10pm. Av. Mem de Sá 17, Lapa. ✆ **021/2232-5704.** Cover R$5–R$15 (US$2.50–US$7.50/£1.35–£4). Bus: 464.

Plataforma 1 *Overrated* Ah, the tourist trap. Every city has one. Some are fun in a tacky kind of way. This one should be labeled with a radioactive sticker reading AVOID. What's offered is supposedly a song-and-dance showcase of Brazilian culture, but the reality is a mediocre supper served up with a glitzy Vegas-style show. The whole slick and packaged product has all the spontaneity and charm of a McDonald's Big Mac combo—and about as much connection to Brazilian culture. Rua Adalberto Ferreira 32, Leblon. ✆ **021/2274-4022.** Admission price depends on whom you book through. Minimum price R$100 (US$50/£27). Bus: 415.

Samba School Rehearsals If you are in Rio in the period from September up to Carnaval, you can attend a samba school rehearsal to get a feel for the event and the rhythms. Although located in the poorer neighborhoods away from the Zona Sul, a number of the *quadras* (where the rehearsals are held) are very accessible and just a short taxi ride away (for more information see p. 142). Mangueira, Salgueiro, Vila Isabel, Viradouro, and Rocinha are easy to get to by taxi from the Zona Sul and are used to receiving foreign visitors.

LIVE MUSIC

Aside from these listings, many small *chopperias* and botequins (see "Bars & Pubs," later in this chapter, for longer descriptions of these two institutions) will often have a singer or small combo playing. Usually there's a small cover charge (*couvert* in Portuguese) for this entertainment. By sitting down and listening you're agreeing to foot the bill. The fee is automatically added to your tab. If you want to know what the couvert is before deciding to stay, simply ask the waiter. The key phrase is *"Quanto é o couvert?"* or "How much is the cover?"

Café Sacrilégio *Finds* Located next door to Carioca da Gema, the Café Sacrilégio could be its twin. The venues look similar—both are

Moments The *Gafieira* of Days Gone By

The traditional ballroom dance halls known as *gafieiras* once defined the Carioca nightlife scene. Still worth a visit even if you can't dance, *gafieiras* are a legacy of the elegant days of old, when couples would dress for the occasion and everyone knew the steps. Most folks don't show up in suits or ball gowns anymore, but couples still dance with elegance and the tunes are unmistakably Brazilian: samba, *pagode*, a bit of rumba or foxtrot, and nowadays lots of forró. To experience the world of Gafieira, visit the Elite (only open Fri at 7pm, Sat at 1pm, and Sun at 6pm; Rua Frei Caneca 4, Centro; ✆ **021/2232-3217**). Even if you can't dance, it's worth having a drink and watching in awe and admiration as some of the older folks strut their stuff. Another mainstay on the Carioca ballroom scene is g*afieira* Estudantina. Many students of the dance school come and show off, but newcomers and novices are made to feel equally welcome. Doors open at 11pm, open only on Fridays and Saturdays, Praça Tiradentes 79, Centro. ✆ **021/2507-8067**.

renovated heritage homes—and both house excellent samba bands. It's hard to say which one is better. We usually poke our heads in, listen to the music, and pick the one that we like best. Either way it's hard to go wrong. Best of all, Café Sacrilégio is open every night of the week. Rua Mem de Sá 81, Lapa. ✆ **021/3970-1461.** Cover usually R$15–R$20 (US$7.50–US$10/£4–£5.50). Bus: 464.

Canecão One of Rio's most traditional music venues; everyone who's anyone in Brazilian music has played this aging 3,000-person auditorium, from Djavan to Milton Nascimento to Gal Costa. The best sections in the house are the tables in Section A and the **balcão nobre.** These give you great views of the stage and a chance to have a drink or a snack. Avoid the *poltronas* (numbered seats) as these have horrible side views of the stage. The box office and theater are just across the street from the Rio Sul shopping center. Av. Venceslau Brás 215, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2543-1241.** www.canecaopetrobras.com.br. Ticket prices range from R$20 (US$10/£5) to R$140 (US$70/£38) for front-row seats at the big-ticket shows. Bus: 474 to Rio Sul.

Carioca da Gema *Finds* One of the best little venues in town, Carioca da Gema offers all samba all the time. The busy nights are Friday and Saturday when latecomers will be left with standing room

Finds The New Lapa—Gamboa

Just beyond the Praça Mauá, close to the port area is one of Rio's older neighborhoods, Gamboa. It has many lovely 19th-century buildings, pretty squares, and a fascinating history (this is where slaves were brought upon arrival and according to many, the birthplace of samba) and it's just on the cusp of an urban revival similar to Lapa's 10 to 15 years ago. A few visionary entrepreneurs have set up shop here; the pioneer was **Trapiche Gamboa** (Rua Sacadura Cabral 155; ✆ **021/2516-0868;** closed Sun and Mon). Taking up a gorgeous three-story building from 1856, it has been transformed into a fabulous live-music venue playing, what else, samba. More recent newcomers are **The Week** (Rua Sacadura Cabral 154; ✆ **021/2253-1020**), Rio's hottest new gay dance club, and **Sacadura** (Rua Sacudura Cabral 147; ✆ **021/2233-0378**), a more upscale live-music venue. It's worth keeping on eye on this area because it seems like new places are opening up every couple of months.

only. The show normally kicks off at 9pm so come early if you want to grab a spot close to the stage, and enjoy a bite to eat while waiting for things to heat up. Open Monday through Saturday. Rua Mem de Sá 79, Lapa. ✆ **021/2221-0043.** Cover varies but is rarely more than R$18 (US$9/£5). Bus: 464.

Centro Cultural Carioca ★★ *Finds* This beautifully restored building from the 1920s (just off the Praça Tiradentes) makes a great live-music venue. Housed on the second floor, the Centro Cultural hosts local musicians and big names who specialize in samba, MPB, *choro,* and *gafieira.* The room is cozy and intimate, and guests sit at small tables to watch the shows. No shows on Sunday, usually. Rua do Teatro, Centro. ✆ **021/2242-9642.** www.centroculturalcarioca.com.br. Cover varies, usually R$15–R$20 (US$7.50–US$10/£4–£5). Bus: 125 to Praça Tiradentes.

Cinemathèque Jamclub With Botafogo's revived nightlife scene it was only a matter of time before it would produce a decent live-music venue and the Jamclub is all that. With only a 150 places, it is intimate and small and still manages to draw big names on the local music scene. The outside area has a lovely patio and outside bar, perfect for a pre- or postconcert bite or drink. Rua Voluntários da Pátria 53, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2359-0216.** www.jamclub.com.br. Cover depends on event but rarely exceeds R$30 (US$15/£8). Metrô: Botafogo.

Circo Voador You can't miss this venue; it's a large tent-like structure (the name translates as *flying circus*) located right beneath the aquaduct in Lapa. The Circo Voador is one of the most eclectic venues in town, offering everything from samba and pagode, to house, funk, and even the Village People (yes, the men from the YMCA). It's a great venue. The open structure is perfect for Rio's tropical climate and a large outdoor patio allows you plenty of space to take in the music under the stars, with the rambling of the streetcar on the arches overhead for company. Rua dos Arcos s/n, Lapa. ✆ **021/2533-5873.** www.circovoador.com.br. Cover depends on event but ranges from R$10–R$60 (US$5–US$30/£3–£16). Bus: 464.

Estrela da Lapa Proof that Lapa's appeal extends beyond the young and bohemian. This elegant star in the neighborhood caters to the moneyed 35-and-older Zona Sul crowd. Music varies from jazz to salsa, samba, swing, and even instrumental. The venue—a restored Lapa mansion—is lovely, and though the stage is small, three levels of seating make for enough room even on busy nights. Rua Mem de Sá 69. ✆ **021/2507-6686.** www.estreladalapa.com.br. Cover ranges from R$10–R$30 (US$5–US$15/£3–£8). Bus: 464.

Rio Scenarium ★★★ *Overrated* It may seem like a contradiction to give the Rio Scenarium both three stars and an overrated at the same time but let me explain. The Rio Scenarium is probably the most beautiful bar in Rio. Located in a renovated warehouse on the edge of Lapa, this antiques-store-turned-bar is one of the places that played a big role in reviving Lapa's nightlife several years ago when there were few classy options available. Now, however, I'd say the Rio Scenarium is a victim of its own success. Recommended by every single guidebook and travel article about Rio, the place is often packed with more gringos (and women who like gringos) than locals. Although it's still worth seeing, don't make this your only stop when exploring Lapa's music scene. Rua do Lavradio 20, Centro. ✆ **021/2233-3239.** Cover R$15–R$20 (US$6.25–US$8.40/£4–£8). Taxi recommended.

Vivo Rio ★★★ One of Rio's newest concert venues, the Vivo Rio is located right next to the Museu de Arte Moderno on Rio's downtown waterfront. Similar in size to the Caneção, it has been specializing in big-name concerts, with both Brazilian and foreign artists, with people like BB King, Maria Bethania, and Gilberto Gil. The only drawback here is the high ticket prices—R$180 (US$90/£48) or more for a decent seat is not unheard of in this venue. Rua Infante Dom Henrique, Centro, next to the Museu de Arte Moderna. ✆ **021/2272-2900.** www.vivorio.com.br. Cover R$60–R$300 (US$30–US$150/£15–£75). Taxi recommended.

Tips Nightlife Zones: Lapa

Bars and clubs have their moments; so do neighborhoods over time. Lapa is definitely on the up again. In the roaring '20s Lapa's vibrant nightlife earned it the nickname "Montmartre of the Tropics." It fell on hard times in the '50s and '60s, but in the last few years Lapa has undergone a major revival as even Cariocas from trendy Ipanema and Leblon come here to party. City and state governments have sat up and taken notice, investing money renovating some of the neighborhood's gorgeous heritage buildings, encouraging the development of restaurants and bars, and pumping R$5 million (US$2.5 million/£1.35 million) into the revitalization of the **Rua do Lavradio.**

Things hop almost every night of the week, but the best days are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Lapa's nightlife consists of two different kinds of experiences. There are the carefully preserved heritage buildings turned music venues such as Carioca da Gema, Estrela da Lapa, Rio Scenarium, and Café Sacrilégio that offer some of the best samba in town. Then there is the much grittier street scene, centered around the Rua da Lapa and the parallel running Rua Joaquim Silva. These two streets are a major *point* (definition of *point* on p. 134) where mostly young people come to drink, chat, flirt, and dance. The small music venues on the Rua Joaquim Silva are anything but nicely renovated (some are big-time sleazy), but half the fun is walking around and poking your head in (cover rarely exceeds R$5/US$2.50/£1.35). In a 2-block range you will hear anything from reggae to samba to brega, hip-hop, funk, and salsa. The square in front of the arches is packed with food and drink stalls. As long as you stick to the main streets that have lots of people on them the area is quite safe at night.

DANCE CLUBS

Baronneti One of the most happening dance clubs in Rio, Baronneti attracts a well-to-do and attractive crowd in their 20s to 40s. Part of their secret is the minimum drink requirement; at a stiff R$70 (US$30/£15) minimum for guys on Saturdays, there's no rubbing elbows with the riffraff here. What you get is a fine-looking classy

upscale club, two floors of fabulous dance music to dance the night away, plenty of couches, and a chill-out space. Rua Barão da Torre 354, Ipanema. ✆ **021/2522-1460.** www.baronneti.com.br. Drink minimum women R$20–R$50 (US$10–US$25/£5–£14), men R$50–R$80 (US$25–US$40/£14–£22). Bus: 474.

Fosfobox Fosfobox is Copacabana's trendy *club du jour,* or rather *de nuit.* Located in a small basement off Rua Siqueira Campos, the club only has room for about 150, who hear discs spun by a variety of DJs. On Thursday it's rock; Friday and Saturday are house and techno. Open Wednesday through Sunday. Rua Siqueira Campos 143, 22A basement, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2548-7498.** www.fosfobox.com.br. Cover R$20 (US$10/£5). Metrô: Siqueira Campos.

Help *Overrated* Often recommended by hotel concierges to (sometimes unsuspecting) male visitors, Help is where gringo travelers and Brazilian working girls meet, which means that beautiful dark-eyed lovely with whom you're getting on so well is definitely expecting payment. Most negotiate their rates at the start of the evening, just to keep everything upfront. Av. Atlântica 3432, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2522-1296.** Cover R$15–R$25 (US$7.50–US$13/£4–£7). Bus: 474.

00 Pronounced *zero-zero,* this nightclub is located right next to the Planetarium in Gávea. The club has a large outdoor deck with wooden benches and comfortable recliners, perfect for those warm summer evenings. The inside space is divided into a restaurant area and a small bar and dance floor. Rua Padre Leonel France 240, Gávea. ✆ **021/2540-8041.** www.00site.com.br. Cover R$20–R$30 (US$10–US$15/£5–£8). Taxi recommended.

BARS & PUBS

There are various ways that bar and restaurant owners can extract money from guests: One of them is the *couvert.* The *couvert* in restaurants used to refer to the small appetizer plate that is served when you first arrive—olives, bread and butter, pâté, and the like. Nowadays it's also the name given to a live-music fee. If the bar has a musician playing, chances are something between R$2 and R$10 (US$1–US$5/£.50–£3) per person or per table will be added to your bill. Always ask when going into a restaurant or bar with live music if there is a cover or *"couvert para a música,"* to avoid any surprises when your bill comes.

BOTEQUINS

Arco do Teles Tucked away in an alley just off Praça XV, the Arco do Teles looks like a movie set of old Rio. Perfectly preserved colonial

Ladies of The Night . . . And Day

They've been an integral part of the neighborhood since the '40s, the working girls and their customers who occupy selected slices of the Copacabana waterfront. The good news is that these places are not dangerous or even overly sleazy. Indeed, it can be interesting observing the hustle and bustle and to and fro, though the atmosphere is not exactly family entertainment (unless you come from a very odd family). Regular hangouts for sex tourists and working women include the Balcony Bar and the Lido square, which is also home to a number of strip clubs. This area is between the Copacabana Palace and the Avenida Prado Junior, Copa's main drive-by thoroughfare for street prostitutes. Farther down the waterfront by the Help disco, the Terraço Atlantico is where johns and hookers hook up in the afternoon and early evening. For those who like people-watching it can make for a fascinating scene. The area around the Rio Othon Hotel is another popular meeting place. Daytime contacts are made at the Meia Petaca patio or else out on the beach while working on that tan line.

two-stories are set on narrow cobblestone streets lined with restaurants and cafes. Though it's a good place for a quick lunch, prime time is after work hours, especially on Thursday and Friday. Office workers flock here to grab a few cold chopps and catch some music before heading home. As the evening wears on, tables and chairs take over the alley, creating a large impromptu patio—it's one of the best people-watching spots in town. Travessa do Comércio, Arco do Teles (from the Praça XV, facing toward the bay, you will see the arch that marks the entrance to the alley on your left). Bus: 110 or 415.

Belmonte An old-fashioned botequim with bright lights, dark-wood furniture, and tile floors, the Belmonte serves up great beer, sandwiches, and snacks at almost any time of the day, but in the evenings and on weekend afternoons things get really hopping: Patrons spill out on the sidewalk, making do with improvised tables made out of barrels. Although now a local chain with brand-new old-fashioned Belmontes in Lagoa, Ipanema, and Copacabana, the Flamengo Belmonte remains the best. Praia do Flamengo 300, Flamengo. ✆ **021/2552-3349**. Bus: 464.

Moments The Culture of Botequins

Botequins are to Rio what pubs are to London and cafes are to Paris: the spot where locals gather, be it for end-of-day drinks or impassioned late-night philosophizing. Brazilians refer to botequins as *pé sujos*—literally "dirty feet"—meaning they're nothing fancy, often just plastic tables and fluorescent lights (though rich in character and local flavor). Some botequins have developed into popular nightlife attractions, offering live music and excellent food, and drawing crowds from all over the city. But most botequins remain small, not very fancy watering holes where one can kick back with a cold beer, have some snacks, and catch up with the latest gossip. See a description of the most popular ones below.

Bip Bip Another internationally acclaimed botequim—the Parisian daily *Le Monde* featured this tiny bar on its front page—Bip Bip owes its fame to an outstanding musical program. Tuesday and Sunday nights are the best evenings to catch some great samba or *pagode* (a more mellow kind of samba). Owner Alfredo Melo—*Alfredinho* to most everyone—tries to keep his neighbors happy, so on Sunday the live music winds down early at 10pm. The bar stays open daily until 1am. Rua Almirante Gonçalves 50, Copacabana. ✆ **021/2267-9696.** Bus: 432.

Bracarense Once voted the best botequim in town—the *New York Times* even proclaimed it the best in Brazil—Bracarense may be suffering a bit from its own success. On Saturday when the botequim is packed, service often slows to a crawl. Still, Bracarense's beer and food remain top-shelf. Rua José Linhares 85, Leblon (corner of Ataulfo de Paiva). ✆ **021/2294-3549.** Bus: 464.

Jobi Jobi is busy any day of the week, but on Friday and Saturday a line is guaranteed. You may as well make friends with others in the line, as chances are you'll be seated closely together in this intimate, cozy bar. Conversations frequently fly across the tables. Like many botequins, Jobi has excellent beer, tasty snacks, and a great atmosphere. On top of that, Jobi stays open until 4:30am, making it a favorite post-party haunt to wind down from an evening out. Av. Ataulfo de Paiva 1166, Leblon. ✆ **021/2274-0547.** Bus: 434.

OTHER BARS & PUBS

Academia da Cachaça A field trip to the Academia da Cachaça puts the concept of advanced education in a whole new light. Here

Finds The Kiosks of Lagoa

They began as lowly concession stands, but the kiosks around the Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas have evolved into a fun, casual nightlife scene. Known in Portuguese as *quiosques da Lagoa,* they're the perfect place to stroll, munch, drink, and people-watch. Set at regular intervals along the pleasant green path that girdles the Lagoa, the kiosks range in size and quality from simple snack stands to full-fledged restaurants and entertainment centers. The cuisine ranges from Brazilian basic to Lebanese, Japanese, or Italian, while the entertainment ranges from a boom box on volume "11" to excellent live bands (some of which charge a small cover). The thickest concentration of kiosks begins opposite the Jockey Club. Another grouping clusters close to the Parque da Catacumba at the Ipanema and back end of Copacabana of the Lagoa. They're open year-round, but they're especially popular in summer; weekday hours are from 6pm onward—they get busy around 10pm—and on weekends from noon onward. A full loop around the Lagoa is 7.5km (4½ miles), making for a pleasant 2-hour walk.

you can dispute and discuss the finer points of the fiery white cane liquor that is Brazil's national drink. For though all *cachaça* comes from cane juice, not all *cachaças* are created equal. The selection at the Academia is overwhelming. The menu here offers a variety of Brazilian snacks to munch on while trying yet one more shot. Or two more shots. Or three. Or . . . Rua Conde de Bernadotte 26, loja G, Leblon. ✆ **021/2239-1542.** www.academiadacachaca.com.br. Bus: 415.

Bar do Adão This lovely heritage house in Botafogo houses an excellent bar that serves up the best *pasteis* in town, or the second-best *pasteis*, as the original Bar do Adão in the Zona Norte neighborhood of Grajau first developed their recipe for success. Made out of light fluffy dough, the *pasteis* come in an amazing variety of fillings, are quickly deep-fried, and arrive piping hot at your table. The 60 different flavors include brie and apricot, Gorgonzola and sun-dried tomato, prawns and cream cheese, shiitake mushrooms, and more. Rua Dona Mariana 81, Botafogo. ✆ **021/2535-4572.** Metrô: Botafogo.

Devassa What started as a cute neighborhood bar in Leblon is slowly spreading around the city. The original location on the Rua General San Martin still packs them in on most nights but patrons

now have the option of heading out to the Jardim Botânico location and enjoying the large patio. The Devassa microbrews can now be purchased at many other bars around the city. The most popular Devassa brews are the blond *(loura),* redhead *(ruiva),* and brunette *(morena).* Rua General San Martin 1241, Leblon. ✆ **021/2540-6087.** Bus: 415 or Av. Lineu de Paula Machado 696, Jardim Botânico. ✆ **021/2294-2915.** Bus: 572 (get off at Rua Jardim Botânico, corner Rua J.J. Seabra).

Espaço de Convivência Tumbao do Malevo *Finds* Yes, you do have to climb up the steep stairs but you will be rewarded by a funky outdoor patio that serves great tapas and drinks. This lovely old house in Santa Teresa opens its door Friday through Sunday and makes for a great spot to grab a drink and a bite and maybe catch a band in the evening. Rua Paschoal Carlos Magno 121, Santa Teresa. ✆ **021/2242-9434.** Bus: 464.

Mercado Cobal de Humaitá *Finds* By day a mild-mannered fruit-and-vegetable market, at night the Mercado transforms itself into a huge outdoor bar scene. Seven or eight different restaurants and *chopperias* (a downscale botequim; *chopperias* sell draft beer and very basic snacks) all meld into one large bustling patio, with busy waiters racing up and down the aisles trying to keep their tables straight. **Galeto Mania** serves up a tasty grilled chicken, **Pizzapark** offers a full range of pizzas, and **Manekineko** whips up tray after tray of fresh sushi, while **Espirito Chopp** serves the best cold draft beer. Cobal de Humaitá, Rua Voluntarios da Patria 446, Botafogo. Galeto Mania. ✆ **021/2527-0616.** Manekineko ✆ **021/2537-1510.** Bus: 178.

Finds Waterfront Upgrade

In 2006 the city of Rio began a major overhaul of the sidewalk kiosks along the waterfront, knocking down the old ones and rebuilding from scratch. Nineteen modern glass kiosks with spacious wooden decks, a state-of-the-art bar and kitchen, and underground washrooms and showers have been built. So far all the new kiosks have been inaugurated along Leme and Copacabana beach. Ipanema and Leblon are slated for upgrades in the next 2 years. Several of these are being run by popular bars or restaurants. Across from Rua Miguel Lemos is the Siri Mole kiosk, serving Bahian seafood dishes. To enjoy a glass of champagne, visit the Champanheria opposite Rua Constante Ramos. For a sample of cachaça try the Cachaçaria Mangueira kiosk toward Leme, in front of Rua Hilário de Gouveia.

Moments Making Your *Point*

Rio is full of *points.* Pronounced poin-*chee* in Portuguese, a point is a location on the street that attracts people who attract other people who attract people who provide food, drinks, sometimes music, and all the other ingredients of a party. Complicated? Here's an example: One night we were headed over to Galeria Café with some friends. Just as we got there we met up with some other friends, and when we saw there was a bit of a line we got to chatting outside and bought some beers from a street vendor. Some other friends came, and other people whom we didn't know but who were there to meet some of their friends. We ordered more beers, and later some munchies from another vendor; before we noticed it was time to go home. We never did set foot in the bar we intended to patronize. That evening was a classic *point*—a fun, impromptu street party. No one can say for sure when one will emerge, or why they show up where they do. Points just . . . *are.*

GAY & LESBIAN NIGHTLIFE

Rio's gay community is fairly small, certainly smaller than one would expect from a city of 10 million people. For all Rio's reputation for sexual hedonism, the macho culture still predominates. As lasciviously as heterosexual couples may behave in public, open displays of affection—even hand-holding—between same-sex couples are still not accepted in Brazil. The big exception, of course, is Carnaval, when many straight and gay men dress as women (Carmen Miranda is always a popular costume), and parades with drag queens are cheered by everyone. But this spirit of openness lasts only until the last samba drums fade away at the dawn of Ash Wednesday.

Currently, the most popular nightspot is in Ipanema around the Galeria Café on the Rua Teixeira de Melo. During the day the stretch of sand close to Posto 8 (opposite the Rua Farme de Amoedo) is also popular. Copacabana has a number of gay clubs and bars as well as a popular meeting place on the beach at Rainbow's, in front of the Copacabana Palace Hotel. In Rio's old downtown there are a few popular places around the Avenida Mem de Sá and Rua do Lavradio. A good resource to pick up is the latest edition of the *Gay Guide Brazil,* a small booklet available at some of the clubs and bookstores in Ipanema, or check http://riogayguide.com. The Brazilian term for

gay-friendly is GLS, which stands for gay, lesbian, and sympathizers. Often you will see this abbreviation used in listings or restaurant and bar reviews.

After you get tired of the beach, go to **Bar Bofetada,** Rua Farme de Amoeda 87 (✆ **021/2227-6992**). Located just a few blocks from Ipanema's prime gay beach, this botequim is perfect for a beer, snack, and flirt with local guys.

Set in a lovely small gallery stunningly decorated with a changing display of work by local artists, the **Galeria Café,** Rua Teixeira de Melo 31E, Ipanema (✆ **021/2523-8250;** www.galeriacafe.com.br; Bus: 415), packs a gorgeous collection of men, shoulder to shoulder, bicep to bicep, into its combo art space, dance club, and bar. Those that can't fit—and there are many—just hang out in front. The Galeria really gets hopping, inside and out, after 1am. The cover charge is R$10 to R$25 (US$5–US$13/£3–£7), open from Wednesday through Sunday.

Also popular is **Dama de Ferro (the Iron Lady),** Rua Vinicius de Moraes 288, Ipanema (✆ **021/2247-2330;** www.damadeferro.com.br). Decorated by artist Adriana Lima, who also did the amazing decor at Galeria Café, Dama de Ferro is the it-spot at the moment, popular with gays and straights; high tolerance for electronic music is a must. Cover is R$10 to R$25 (US$5–US$13/£3–£7), open Wednesday through Sunday.

Le Boy, Rua Raul Pompeia 102, Copacabana (✆ **021/2513-4993;** www.leboy.com.br; Bus: 415), is the largest and best-known gay club in Rio. It's glamorous, funky, and extremely spacious with a soaring four-story ceiling hovering somewhere above the dance floor. A range of special events attracts national and international celebrities and assorted (beautiful) hangers-on. Go after midnight, when things really start to hop. The club is open Tuesday through Sunday; cover ranges from R$5 to R$15 (US$2.50–US$7.50/£1.35–£4) for men. This may be the only club in town where women pay more than men; any night of the week the cover for women is set at a hefty R$60 (US$30/£16). All for equal opportunity, Le Boy's owner also inaugurated **La Girl** next door, Rua Raul Pompeia 102 (✆ **021/2247-8342**), Rio's first truly upscale nightclub for gay women with excellent DJs and Gogo girl shows. La Girl is open on Monday and Wednesday to Sunday (men only allowed on Mon and Sun). Cover ranges from R$5 to R$15 (US$2.50–US$7.50/£1.35–£4).

The Week, Rua Sacadura Cabral 154, Saude (✆ **021/2253-1020;** www.theweek.com.br), is the new hottest gay dance club in town.

This huge mega-dance club can hold 2,000 people and is packed every Saturday night. Famous national and international guest DJs and Go Go boys keep the crowd going. Open Saturdays at midnight. Often open for events on Fridays and Wednesdays; check listings.

1 Everything You Need to Know About Carnaval

Ah, Carnaval. The name evokes explosive images of colorful costumes, lavish floats, swarming masses, and last-minute debauchery before the sober Lenten season begins. Though it may look like sheer entertainment, Carnaval means hard work and dedication for many Cariocas; to some, it's a full-time job.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT? The religious aspect of the celebration faded some time ago, but Carnaval's date is still determined by the ecclesiastical calendar, officially occupying only the 4 days immediately preceding Ash Wednesday. With typical ingenuity and panache, however, Cariocas have managed to stretch the party into an event lasting several months, culminating in the all-night feast of color and sound that is the **Samba School Parade,** where tens of thousands of costumed dancers, thousands of percussionists, and hundreds of gorgeous performers atop dozens of floats all move in choreographed harmony to the nonstop rhythm of samba.

If you're not able to attend Carnaval itself, **rehearsals**—which usually start in mid-September or early October—are an absolute must, and the closest you'll get to the real thing. Even if you are in town for Carnaval, attending a rehearsal will give you a great appreciation of the logistics involved in putting together the parade, plus you'll learn all the words and dance moves. (See "Watching a Rehearsal," later in this chapter.)

In the 2 weeks leading up to the big event, you'll begin to see the **blocos.** These are community groups—usually associated with a particular neighborhood or sometimes with a bar—who go around the neighborhood, playing music and singing and dancing through the streets. Their instruments and costumes easily identify the official bloco members, but everyone is welcome and encouraged to follow along and add to the merriment. A number of blocos are so well known that they draw throngs of followers in the tens of thousands. The **Banda de Carmen Miranda** in Ipanema with its extravagant drag queens is a hoot. (See "Hanging with the Blocos," later in this chapter, for a list of popular blocos.)

Carnaval finally kicks off on the Friday before Ash Wednesday with an explosion of lavish **balls** *(bailes).* Originally the *bailes* were

The Samba Parade Grounds

reserved for the elite, while the masses partied it up with vulgar splendor in the streets. Today, they're still a pricey affair and the **Copacabana Palace Ball** remains *the* society event in Rio. The **blocos** also kick into high gear once Carnaval arrives with several groups parading every day from Saturday through Tuesday.

WATCHING THE SAMBA PARADE

Then, there is the *pièce de résistance:* the **Samba School Parade,** the event that the samba schools work, plan, and sweat over for an entire year. Starting Sunday and continuing through Monday night, the 14 top-ranked samba schools (really community groups whose sole focus is the parade) compete for the honor of putting on the best show. The competition takes place in the **Sambodromo,** a 1.5km-long (1-mile) concrete parade ground built in the center of Rio for this once-a-year event. Each night over 60,000 spectators watch the contest live, while millions more tune in on TV to catch this feast for the senses.

Even before the parade starts, the streets surrounding the **Sambodromo** are closed to car traffic, while the grounds around this stadium are transformed into Carnaval Central. A main stage hosts a variety of acts and performances, and hundreds of vendors set up shop with food and drinks. This ***terreirão do samba*** **(samba land),** as Riotur calls it, is open the weekend prior to Carnaval, from Friday through Tuesday during Carnaval, and then again for the Saturday afterward for the Parade of Champions. Contact **Riotur** (✆ **021/2217-7575**) for more detailed program information.

HOW & WHERE TO GET TICKETS It is next to impossible to buy tickets directly from Liesa, the **Liga das Escolas de Samba** (✆ **021/2253-7676;** www.liesa.com.br). The tickets go on sale a few months before carnival and always sell out in 20 minutes. The few tourist tickets that remain Liesa sells at an extraordinary markup. Most tourists are left buying from scalpers or travel agencies. Reputable travel agencies include **Blumar** (✆ **021/2142-9300;** www.blumar.com.br) and **BIT** (✆ **021/2256-5657**; www.bitourism.com), both of which sell good tickets at reasonable rates, but both of which often sell out early. If you've got your heart set on seeing the parade, buy your tickets by October or at the latest November preceding the year you want to go. In recent years, a number of Internet agencies have sprung up, but all are too new to have enough of a track record for us to call them reliable. **Rio Services Carnaval** (www.rio-carnival.net), at least sells through PayPal, which may offer some protection, but it's still very much buyer beware. (Anyone who

Tips A Parade-Day Preview

On the day of each parade, the schools arrive outside the parade grounds to assemble their floats, props, and other gear. The streets around the Sambodromo, including Avenida Presidente Vargas, are closed for traffic, and pedestrians can stroll watching the schools put finishing touches on a year's worth of work. A great opportunity to take a close-up look at the floats, take pictures, and meet some of the people who put it all together.

successfully does this, let me know. Their prices are genuinely cheap.) As a next-to-last resort, try your hotel, but expect to pay a hefty premium for this service. As a last resort, you can try the scalpers outside the stadium (the scalpers will find you as you come out any of the Metrô stops near the Sambodromo). Be careful! Each ticket consists of a magnetic plastic card and an attached paper slip—you need both to enter. The best deals come after the first couple of schools have paraded (say 11pm) when the scalpers start to get a little desperate.

Depending on the agency, or the desperation of your scalper, tickets for the bleachers begin at around R$190 (US$95/£47) for section 4, and rise to US$250 (£125) for section 7. Chairs in a front row box *(frisa)* start at R$225 (US$450/£225) in section 4 and US$800 (£400) in section 7. These are base prices. Many agencies charge much more.

Note: Avoid the tour agencies offering a "package" that includes transportation to and from the Sambodromo, at a very hefty markup. These transfers are not only unnecessary, they're actually a disadvantage. Getting to the parade, the easiest, safest quickest route is by Metrô. Due to street closures, buses will take much, much longer to reach the stadium. Coming home, there are plenty of taxis outside the Sambodromo, and you can leave whenever you want. If you've booked a package, you're expected to wait on the bus until 7am when the last school finishes before you can go home.

General seating is in concrete bleachers, with no space assigned. Your ticket gives you access to the section. After that it's up to you to find a spot and squeeze in. There are pillows for sale, or you can bring your own. The exception to the hard concrete rule is in section 9, the tourist section, where there are numbered assigned places. The advantages are obvious. The disadvantage is that you miss out on

some of the *joie de vivre* that comes with being surrounded by hundreds of happy partying Brazilians.

In addition to the bleachers, there are front-row boxes, called *frisas* in Portuguese. These are comfortable chairs that sit in a strip of boxes located at ground level along the parade route. There are six seats to a box (three rows of two) and seating is assigned. The frisas have the advantage of closeness and assigned seating. The disadvantages are a higher price tag and—some say—being too close to really appreciate the whole of the spectacle (like sitting in the very front row at a musical or movie).

Besides frisas and bleachers, there are the exclusive VIP boxes. However, if you can wangle an invitation to one of those, you don't need any help from us.

Whether you choose bleacher or frisa, the best sections are 5, 7, and 9. These place you near the middle of the parade avenue, allowing you to see up and down as the schools come through. Avoid sitting at the start or the end of the Avenida (sections 1, 3, 4, 6, and 13).

If you have tickets you can head directly to the Sambodromo. The parade grounds are divided into sections (see map on p. 137): even-numbered sections can be accessed from the Central Station side (Metrô: Central); odd-numbered sections can be accessed from the Praça XI side (Metrô: Praça XI). Don't worry, there are lots of police and staff around to point you in the right direction.

The parade starts at 9pm, but unless you want to stake out a particular spot you may as well take your time arriving, because the event will continue nonstop until about 7 or 8am. We recommend leaving a bit early as well to avoid the big crunch at the end when the entire crowd tries to squeeze through a narrow set of revolving gates. Food and drinks are available inside the Sambodromo. Though prices aren't outrageous, it's a serious pain elbowing your way back and forth from your seat: Grab something at one of the many inexpensive kiosks outside the Sambodromo before you head in.

A FEW HELPFUL HINTS

Whether you are attending a rehearsal, following a bloco, or watching the parade, here are a few helpful hints to ensure you have a good time.

- Dress casually and comfortably. The weather is usually hot and humid so a tank top or bikini top and shorts are fine. Comfortable shoes are a must as you will be on your feet for hours, dancing and jumping to the music.

Tips Carnaval Redux

If you miss the parade during Carnaval, attend the Parade of Champions on the Saturday after Carnaval. The five top schools give an encore to close the Sambadrome Carnaval season. Tickets go on sale the Thursday after Carnaval. At R$80 (US$40/£22) and up for a good spot, they're considerably less expensive than the original event. Contact the **Liga das Escolas de Samba** (✆ **021/2253-7676**), **Alô Rio** (✆ **021/2542-8080**), or **Blumar** (✆ **021/2511-3636;** www.blumar.com.br) for ticket sales.

- Pack light. A purse or any extra accessories are not recommended, especially at the rehearsals and the blocos as you will be dancing and moving around. When watching the parade you can bring a small bag or knapsack and leave it at your feet, but the lighter you travel the better. Make sure you bring enough cash for the evening, some form of ID (driver's license or some other picture ID that is not your passport), and a small camera you can tuck into your pocket. Leave jewelry and other valuables at home.
- The events themselves are very safe, but be aware of pickpockets in large crowds. At the end of the event, take a taxi or walk with the crowds, avoiding any deserted streets or unfamiliar neighborhoods.
- Keep in mind that prices will be slightly higher, cabs may add a premium, and drinks and food at the parade and some other venues may be higher than what you are used to in Brazil.
- Plan to have enough cash for the entire Carnaval period. All financial institutions close for the duration, and it's not unusual for bank machines to run out of money.

PARTICIPATING IN THE PARADE

If you think watching the parade from up close sounds pretty amazing, imagine being in it. Every year, the samba schools open up positions for outsiders to participate in the parade. Putting on this extravaganza is an expensive proposition, and by selling the costumes and the right to parade, the school is able to recuperate some of its costs. But outside paraders are also needed for artistic and competitive reasons. To score high points the school needs to have enough people to fill the Avenida and make the parade look full and colorful. A low turnout can make the school lose critical points.

To parade (*desfilar* in Portuguese) you need to commit to a school and buy a costume (about R$500–R$900/US$250–US$450/£135–£243), which you can often do online. Some sites are in English as well as Portuguese; if not, look under *fantasia* (costume). Depending on the school, they may courier the costume or arrange for a pickup downtown just before the parade, or you may have to make the trek out to wherever they are.

For an added charge, a number of agencies in Rio will organize it all for you, getting you in with a school and arranging the costume. **Blumar** (✆ **021/2142-9300;** www.blumar.com.br) can organize the whole event for you for about R$900 (US$450/£243). For other organizations, contact **Alô Rio** (✆ **021/2542-8080**).

As a participant in the parade you do not automatically get a ticket to watch the rest of the event. If you want to see the other schools you need to purchase a separate ticket. If your school finishes in the top five there will be a repeat performance in the Parade of Champions, held on the Saturday after Carnaval. If you are not able to parade again, consider donating your costume to a fellow traveler or keen Brazilian.

WATCHING A REHEARSAL

Every Saturday from September (or even as early as Aug) until Carnaval, each samba school holds a general samba rehearsal *(ensaio)* at its home base. The band and key people come out and practice their theme song over and over to perfection. It may sound a tad repetitious, but you'd be amazed how a good band playing the same song over and over can generate a *really* great party. People dance for hours, taking a break now and then for snacks and beer. The income generated goes toward the group's floats and costumes. By the end of the night (and these rehearsals go until the wee hours) everyone knows the words to the song and has—hopefully—turned into an ardent fan who will cheer this particular school on at the parade. (General rehearsals usually don't involve costumes or practicing dance routines.) In December and January, the schools also hold dress rehearsals and technical rehearsals at the Sambodromo. Check with Riotur for dates and times.

Most of the samba schools are based in the poorer and quite distant suburbs, but a number of schools such as **Mangueira, Salgueiro, Vila Isabel, and Rocinha** are very accessible and no more than an R$30 (US$15/£8) cab ride from Copacabana. Nor should you worry overly much about safety. Rehearsals take place in an open-air space called a *quadra* that look like a large gymnasium.

There is always security, and the rehearsals are very well attended. Plan to arrive anytime after 11pm. When you are ready to leave there'll be lots of taxis around. Just don't go wandering off into the neighborhood, unless you're familiar with the area. Many hotels will organize tours to the samba school rehearsals, but unless you prefer to go with a group it's not really necessary and certainly a lot cheaper to go on your own.

Tip: A number of the famous schools that are located on the outskirts of the city will hold special rehearsals in the Zona Sul. The ones organized by Beija Flor and Grande Rio are the most popular, often attended by models, actors, and other VIPs. For an authentic experience, it's still better to go to the actual school.

To find out more about specific schools, rehearsals, or participating in the parade, contact the **Liga das Escolas de Samba** (✆ **021/2253-7676;** www.liesa.com.br). If you can't find anyone there who speaks English, contact Alô Rio for assistance (✆ **021/2542-8080**). Or you can try contacting one of the samba schools directly; below you'll find a partial list:

- **Mangueira** (Rio's most favorite samba school and close to downtown), Rua Visconde de Niterói 1072, Mangueira (✆ **021/3872-6786;** www.mangueira.com.br).
- **Beija-flor** (far from downtown but a crowd favorite and winner in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2007), Rua Pracinha Walace Paes Leme 1025, Nilópolis (✆ **021/2791-2866;** www.beija-flor.com.br).
- **Imperatriz** (the winner in 1999, 2000, and 2001), Rua Prof. Lacê 235, Ramos (✆ **021/2270-8037;** www.imperatriz leopoldinense.com.br).
- **Portela,** Rua Clara Nunes 81, Madureira (✆ **021/2489-6440;** www.portelaweb.com.br).
- **Rocinha** (young school, located in the Zona Sul close to Ipanema and Leblon), Rua Bertha Lutz 80, São Conrado (✆ **021/3205-3303;** www.academicosdarocinha.com.br).
- **Salgueiro** (close to downtown, very popular), Rua Silva Telles 104, Andaraí (✆ **021/2238-5564;** www.salgueiro.com.br).
- **Vila Isabel** (close to downtown, mostly locals and very untouristy, winner in 2006) Boulevard 28 de Setembro 382, Vila Isabel (✆ **021/3181-4869;** www.gresunidosdevilaisabel.com.br).

HANGING WITH THE BLOCOS

To experience the real street Carnaval, don't miss the parading blocos. The key to the popularity of the blocos is the informality; everyone is welcome, and you don't need a costume, just comfortable

Tips Carnaval Behind the Scenes

In 2005 the Cidade do Samba (Samba city) in downtown Rio was inaugurated. This large warehouse-style construction provides the samba schools with a space to build their floats and work on their costumes. The location is not too far from the parade ground, making it more conventient for schools to transport their huge floats when it is their turn to parade. Visitors can have a look behind the scenes and see what it takes to put this event together. Twice a month, on Thursdays, the Cidade do Samba also hosts a musical performance giving viewers a taste of the parade. These shows are really designed for tourists and don't have anything of the authenticity that the reshearsals at the actual schools have, but if this is your only opportunity to get a taste of carnaval it's worth it. Open Tuesday through Saturday 10am to 5pm for visits (R$10/US$5/£3). The evening musical performances are always held on a Thursday, starting at 9pm. Admission includes a buffet dinner, R$150 (US$75/£40) or R$75 (US$38/£20) for Rio residents (proof of residency required). For more information and to check on scheduling, please contact the **Liga das Escolas de Samba** (✆ **021/2253-7676**) or **Alô Rio** (✆ **021/2542-8080**) or check www.sambacity.info.

clothes and shoes. (Bear in mind, however, that the informality extends to scheduling. If your group doesn't start on time, grab a beer and chill—they'll show eventually.) Different blocos do have certain styles or attract specific groups, so pick one that suits you and have fun. Riotur publishes an excellent brochure called *Bandas, Blocos and Ensaios,* available through Alô Rio (✆ **021/2542-8080**). Also available from Riotur, Av. Princesa Isabel 183, Copacabana (✆ **021/2217-7563**), is the *Rio Incomparavel* brochure, which has a full listing of events. While traditionally Rio blocos have been free of charge, in recent years a few have picked up on the Salvador practice of charging a small fee and issuing participants a T-shirt to serve as a show of support and a very visible proof of purchase.

Some of the best blocos to look for are **Bloco Cacique de Ramos** and **Cordão do Bola Preta** in Centro; **Barbas** and **Bloco de Segunda** in Botafogo; **Bloco do Bip Bip** and **Banda Santa Clara** in Copacabana; Bloco **Meu Bem Volto Já** in Leme; and **Banda de Ipanema, Banda da Carmen Miranda,** and **Simpatia é Quase Amor** in Ipanema.

Moments **_Reveillon:_ New Year's Eve in Rio**

Trust Brazilians to throw a party where everyone is welcome and admission is free. At Rio's annual New Year's Eve extravaganza, millions pack the beach for an all-night festival of music, food, and fun, punctuated by spectacular fireworks.

Arrive early and enjoy a New Year's buffet at one of the scores of restaurants or hotels along the beachfront Avenida Atlântica. Music kicks off at 8pm, as people make their way down to the beach until every square inch of sand is packed. By midnight, more than two million have joined the countdown. As the clock strikes midnight, the fireworks begin. Five barges moored off Copacabana plus more in Leme, Ipanema, Flamengo, Paquetá, and the Forte de Copacabana, at the end of the beach, flood the sky with a shower of reds, greens, purples, yellows, and golds. When the last whistling spark falls into the sea, bands fire up their instruments and welcome in the new year with a concert that goes on until wee hours. Many stay all night and grab a spot on the sand when they tire. The event is perfectly safe.

During the party, followers of the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé mark Reveillon in their own way. New Year's Eve is an important moment in Candomblé, a time when followers make offerings to the powerful sea goddess Yemanjá. Along the beach circles of women dressed all in white light candles and prepare small boats loaded with flowers, mirrors, trinkets, and perfumes. They launch the boats into the surf in hopes of obtaining Yemanjá's favor for the year to come.

Cariocas traditionally wear white on New Year's Eve; it's the color of peace and the color worn by devotees of Candomblé to honor Yemanjá. Don a pair of white shorts and a T-shirt, but don't forget your swimsuit. The traditional New Year's Eve "polar bear swim" will be even more tempting when the temperature is a balmy 105°F (40°C). Many Cariocas will also buy flowers to take to the beach and offer these to Yemanjá by tossing them in the ocean. ***Tip:*** The best way to get to the event is by subway (buy tickets in advance to avoid lines). Most streets in Copacabana are closed to traffic; parking anywhere near the beach is impossible.

BAILES

More formal than the blocos, the samba balls *(bailes)* are where you go to see and be seen. Traditionally reserved for Rio's elite, some—such as the Copacabana Palace ball—remain the height of elegance, while others have become raunchy and risqué bacchanals. Numerous clubs around town host Carnaval balls.

Among the most fabulous is the notorious **Baile Vermelho e Preto (Red and Black Costume Ball)** held every year on Carnaval Friday in honor of Rio's most popular soccer club, Flamengo. It's known for both the beauty of the female attendees and the skimpiness of their costumes. The **Baile do Preto Branco (Black and White Ball),** also on Carnaval Friday, takes place at the Clube Botafogo. For both events contact **Alô Rio** (✆ **021/2542-8080**) for details and ticket information. The popular Copacabana nightclub **Le Boy** (p. 135) organizes a differently themed ball every night during Carnaval, Friday through Tuesday included. These balls are gay-friendly but not gay-only. Call ✆ **021/2240-3338.** The prime gay event—and one of Rio's most famous balls—is the Tuesday night **Gala Gay** at the Scala nightclub, Av. Afranio de Melo Franco 296, Leblon (✆ **021/2239-4448**). TV stations vie for position by the red carpet, a la Oscar night.

But the grand slam of all Carnaval balls is the Saturday night extravaganza at the Copacabana Palace Hotel, the **Baile do Copa,** which plays host to the crème de la crème of Rio's and Brazil's high society. This is the ball of politicians, diplomats, models, business tycoons, and local and international movie stars. Tickets start at R$600 (US$300/£162) per person and sell out quickly. Call ✆ **021/2548-7070** for details.

8 Side Trips from Rio de Janeiro

Two of the greatest joys of Rio are its mountains and its beaches. Side trips from the cidade maravilhosa explore these two features in greater detail. On weekends and holidays, many head north to the beach resorts dotting the warm Atlantic coast. First and most famous of these is the town of **Búzios,** "discovered" in the 1960s by a bikini-wearing Brigitte Bardot. Now it's a haven for Rio socialites, visiting Argentines, and anyone else who loves their beaches Brazilian-style—civilized, with a beachside table in sight, and a caipirinha in hand.

Heading inland, one finds the summer refuge of an earlier, pre-beach generation, the mountain resort. The prettiest of these is also the closest: **Petrópolis,** the former summer capital of Emperor Pedro II. Just an hour from Rio, this green, graceful refuge is a place of peaceful strolls, great museums, and mountain hikes in the Atlantic rainforest.

Want your history served up with a splash of ocean? The perfect blend can be found in the former colonial port of **Paraty.** Situated almost halfway between Rio and São Paulo, this beautiful historic town had its heyday in the 18th and 19th centuries as a prime transshipment point for gold and later for coffee. Visitors can sail the bays and visit the surrounding sandy beaches and islands in the daytime, and at night wander the cobblestone streets of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, in search of architectural beauty or just some very fine dining.

1 Búzios

It's anyone's guess how small or sleepy the fishing town of Búzios truly was when French starlet Brigitte Bardot stumbled onto its sandy beaches in 1964, but it's certain that in the years since the little town used the publicity to turn itself into Rio's premier beach resort. In the summer the town is packed; many Carioca celebrities own places here, and Argentines continue to invade with a gusto not seen since the Falklands. Despite the influx, the town has managed to retain a good deal of the charm of its fishing village past.

Búzios (the town's full name is Armação de Búzios) sits on the tip of a long, beach-rich peninsula jutting out into the clear blue Atlantic. The sheer number of beaches close to town makes it easy to experience Brazilian beach culture firsthand. **Geribá Beach** is the place for surfing. Quiet and calm and very deep, **Ferruda Beach** is perfect for a lazy afternoon snorkel. Far from town are more isolated spots to steal a quiet moment with a special beach friend, while right in town on **Ossos Beach** you can sip a caipirinha at a beachside cafe and pretend for a moment you're young, rich, and beautiful. In this South American Saint-Tropez, everyone else certainly is.

Finally, on top of serious inquisitions into beach culture, there are more trivial pursuits such as diving, sailing, windsurfing, fine cuisine, and endless opportunities to shop.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION

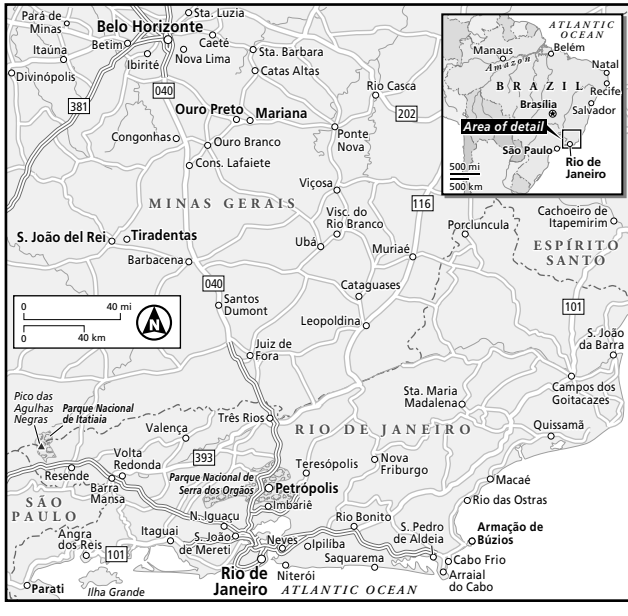
The **Búzios Tourism Secretariat** operates an information kiosk on the downtown Praça Santos Dumont 111 (✆ **0800/24-999** or 022/2623-2099); it's open daily from 9am to 10pm. Two good websites on Búzios are **www.buziosonline.com.br** and **www.buziosturismo.com**.

GETTING THERE

BY CAR Búzios is about a 2-hour drive from Rio de Janeiro. Leaving Rio, follow the signs to Niterói to cross the 16km-long (10-mile) Rio-Niterói bridge. Remember to have R$2.90 (US$1.50/£.75) handy to pay the toll. Across the bridge, stay in the left lane and take the Rio Bonito exit. Once close to Rio Bonito, take the Via Lagos to Araruama/Cabo Frio and follow the signs to the RJ-106 and Búzios. Note that the Via Lagos is also a toll road, R$6.40 (US$3.20/£1.70) on weekdays, R$9.80 (US$4.90/£2.65) on weekends.

BY VAN/TAXI **Malizia Tours** in Búzios (✆ **022/2623-1226** or 022/2623-2622; malizia@mar.com.br) offers transfer to/from Rio by van and taxi. Cost in a 15-person air-conditioned minibus is R$50 (US$25/£14) per person one-way. Pickup can be at your hotel or from the airport.

BY BUS **Auto Viação 1001** (✆ **0300/313-1001;** www.autoviacao1001.com.br) has departures seven times a day from Rio's main bus station (**Novo Rio Rodoviaria,** Av. Francisco Bicalho 1, Santo Cristo; ✆ **021/3849-5001**). Cost of the 3-hour trip is R$20 (US$10/£5.40). In Búzios, buses arrive (and depart) at the Búzios Bus Station (✆ **022/2623-2050**) on Estrada da Usina, corner of Rua Manoel de Carvalho, a 10-minute walk from the center of town.



GETTING AROUND

BY WATER TAXI Water taxis are an efficient and fun way to get around, but they run only during daylight hours and only on the protected side of the bay, from João Fernandes to Tartaruga. To catch a water taxi you can hail one from the beach or the pier in town or phone (✆ **022/2620-8018**). When being dropped off by water taxi, you can set a time for pickup. From Centro to Azeda beach costs R$5 (US$2.50/£1.35) per person and from Centro to João Fernandes beach R$8 (US$4/£2.15) per person. Taxis carry up to seven people.

BY TAXI Taxis can be hailed at the *ponto* in Praça Santos Dumont (✆ **022/2623-2160**) or by calling Búzios Rádio Táxi (✆ **022/2623-1911**).

BY RENTAL CAR Rent a Car 24 horas, Estrada de Búzios 815 (✆ **022/2623-1556;** rentacar24horas@mar.com.br). Cost starts at R$110 (US$55/£30) per day for a Fiat Palio with air-conditioning. Includes unlimited mileage and insurance.

EXPLORING BÚZIOS

HITTING THE BEACHES

The charm of Búzios lies largely in its beaches, the 20 stretches of sand large and small within a few kilometers of the old town. Thanks to the irregular topography of this rugged little peninsula, each beach is set off from the other and has developed its own beach personality. Farthest from the old town is **Manguinhos** beach. Sheltered from the heavy surf, this gentle beach is where many learn to sail and windsurf. A short hop over the neck of the peninsula lies **Geribá** beach, a wonderful long stretch of sand facing out toward the open ocean. This is the beach for surfing, boogie boarding, and windsurfing (see "Outdoor Activities & Watersports," below). Closer to town is **Ferradura** or **Horseshoe** beach. Nestled between rocky headlands in a beautiful horseshoe bay, this beach offers calm, crystal-clear waters, making it the perfect place for a long lazy afternoon's snorkel. Tiny and beautiful, **Olho de Boi** or **Bull's Eye** beach is tucked away on its own at the far end of a small ecological reserve. It can only be reached by a 20-minute walk from surfers' favorite **Brava** beach. Thanks to this isolation, Bull's Eye beach has been adopted by Búzios' clothing-optional crowd. Back on the calm inland side of the peninsula, **João Fernandes** and the pocket-size **João Fernandinho** beaches are busy, happening places lined with beachside cafes and full of people intent on getting and showing off their tans.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES & WATERSPORTS

Most everything in the way of watersports equipment can be rented in Búzios, generally right on the beach.

On **Ferradura** beach, **Happy Surf** (✆ **022/2623-3389**) rents **sailboards, lasers** (a type of one-person sailboat), **Hobie Cats,** and **kayaks.** Happy Surf also gives **courses.** A 6-hour beginner's **sailboard** course costs R$150 (US$75/£40). For more advanced students there are 1- and 2-hour courses costing from R$35 to R$60 (US$18–US$30/£9.50–£16). Lasers rent for R$35 (US$18/£9.50) per half-hour, R$45 (US$23/£12) with instructor. Hobie Cats rent for R$25 (US$13/£7) per half-hour, R$40 (US$20/£11) with instructor. Kayaks rent for R$5 (US$2.50/£1.35) per half-hour, R$8 (US$4/£2.15) per hour. Paddle boats can be rented for R$22 (US$11/£6) per hour.

The following equipment is available at **João Fernandes Beach: kayak rental,** R$5 (US$2.50/£1.35) for 30 minutes; **mask and snorkel package,** R$12 (US$6/£3.25) per hour; and **sailboard,** R$30 (US$15/£8) per hour.

On **Manguinhos** beach, two clubs rent lasers and sailboards: Búzios Vela Club, Rua Maurício Dutra 303 (✆ **022/2623-1237**), and Yucas Beach Club, Rua Maurício Dutra 356 (✆ **022/2623-2001**). Prices similar to those above. Manguinhos is also a popular **kite surfing** location. Intensive weekend courses are available for R$400 (US$200/£108), including gear and 8 hours of instruction. To book a lesson call Búzios Kite Surfing School, ✆ **022/2633-0396.**

BOATING **Schooner trips** are a great way to spend a day in Búzios. A small fleet of converted fishing schooners makes a circuit of about eight of Búzios' beaches plus three offshore islands. On board you trundle along in the sunshine eating complimentary fresh fruit and drinking free caipirinhas (or mineral water). At any of the beaches you're free to get off, hang out and swim for a bit, and then hop back on the next schooner (from your company) that comes along. There are enough boats that you usually don't have to wait long. One company is **Malizia Tour** (✆ **022/2623-1226**), but there's really no need to seek them out. Just walk along Rua das Pedras anywhere near the pier, and you're guaranteed to be approached by a schooner tout. The exact price depends on how many of you there are and how hard you negotiate, but competition between various schooner operators keeps things fairly competitive. Expect to pay from R$30 to R$50 (US$15–US$25/£8–£14) for a half-day's cruise.

DIVING The islands just off Búzios are—along with Angra dos Reis and Arraial do Cabo—some of the best diving spots within a 1-day drive of Rio. Diving takes place at a number of islands about 45 minutes off the coast. Water temperature is normally around 72°F (22°C). Visibility ranges from 10 to 15m (30–50 ft.). Coral formations are fairly basic—mostly soft coral—but there are always lots of parrotfish, and there are often sea turtles (green and hawksbill) and stingrays of considerable size.

Casa Mar, Rua das Pedras 242 (✆ **022/2623-2441;** www.casamar.com.br), offers a full range of services including cylinder refill and courses all the way from basic to nitrox. For a certified diver, a two-dive excursion costs R$110 (US$55/£30) or R$150 (US$75/£40) if you need to rent all the equipment such as a regulator, BCD (buoyancy control device), wet suit, and mask/fins/snorkel. Non-divers who come on the boat pay R$80 (US$40/£22).

SURFING Geribá and Tocuns beaches are the best surfing options. They're located on the way in to Búzios, about 5km (3 miles) from downtown. Closer to town is the smaller Brava beach,

which also often has good waves. Note that board rentals are currently unavailable in Búzios.

BIKING Hard-core mountain bikers would likely find it a little tame, but Búzios is an excellent place for gentle, recreational off-road cycling. There are lots of trails accessible only to pedestrians and cyclists. **Armação Bikes,** Manoel De Carvalho 229 (✆ **022/9213-4597**), and **Bike-Tour,** Rua das Pedras 266, loja 4 (✆ **022/2623-6365**), both rent bikes and can provide trail maps and even guides. Cost is around R$15 (US$7.50/£4) per hour, R$40 (US$20/£11) per day.

ADVENTURE SPORTS **Canoar,** Travessa Oscar Lopez 63, loja 02 (✆ **022/2623-2551**), runs **nature treks, rappelling trips,** and **rafting expeditions** in the Serramar region, about 30 minutes inland from Búzios. A 2-hour trek to a waterfall along the Pai João Trail costs R$30 (US$15/£8), transfer and light lunch included. A 3-hour rappelling trip, including a descent down a 25m (82-ft.) cliff face, costs R$56 (US$28/£15), transfer and light lunch included. Rafting trips leave twice daily, at 9am and 2pm. Participants descend 5km (3 miles) down a Class III river in either six-person or two-person inflatable rafts. Cost is R$60 (US$30/£16). Minimum age is 12.

HORSEBACK RIDING **Canoar,** Travessa Oscar Lopez 63, loja 02 (✆ **022/2623-2551**), runs "eco" horseback trips in the Atlantic rainforest. Horses are very calm, and riders carefully monitored. A 2-hour trip costs R$40 (US$20/£11).

WHERE TO STAY

Búzios is known for its pousadas, similar to North American B&Bs. These small, often owner-operated hotels provide excellent personalized service. By avoiding high season (Dec–Mar and July) and weekends throughout the year, you should be able to get a discount, although you will still end up paying more at a pousada in Búzios than you would anywhere else in Brazil.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Colonna Park Hotel ★★ Colonna Park Hotel offers a superb setting, straddling the hill between the beaches of João Fernando (the most happening beach in town) and João Fernandinho. Rooms in this sprawling Mediterranean-style mansion are spacious and elegantly furnished in cool tones of white and blue. All feature pleasant sitting areas. Forty-eight of the 63 rooms provide an ocean view. If you're in the mood for a splurge, try suite no. 20; it comes with Jacuzzi tub and a large deck with a view of both beaches.

Praia de João Fernandes, Armação de Búzios, RJ. ✆ **022/2623-2245.** Fax 022/2623-2923. www.colonna.com.br. 63 units (showers only). High season R$480 (US$240/£130) double no view, R$520 (US$260/£140) double with view, R$570 (US$285/£154) suite; low season R$340 (US$170/£92) double no view, R$370 (US$185/£100) double with view, R$420 (US$210/£113) suite. Extra person an additional 30% of room rate. Children under 4 stay free in parent's room, over 4 R$40–R$90 (US$20–US$45/£11–£24) extra. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; outdoor pool; sauna; game room; service; massage; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

La Boheme ★ *Kids* At the beginning of João Fernandes Beach, La Boheme overlooks the beach and the ocean from its hillside vantage point. The apartments all offer beautiful views and are within walking distance of the main village and the beaches. All are very spacious and feature kitchenettes, perfect for groups or families traveling with children. A few are split-level suites and sleep up to seven people; the other apartments are on one level only, accommodating up to four people comfortably. The pool area includes a great children's pool, and the beach, about 90m (300 ft.) below the hotel, is safe enough even for the little ones, with almost no waves and perfect bathtub-like temperatures.

Praia de João Fernandes, lote 1, Armação de Búzios, 28950-000 RJ. ✆ **022/2623-1744.** www.labohemehotel.com. 32 units (showers only). R$250–R$320 (US$105–US$133/£52–£66) double; R$380 (US$190/£103) in 1-bedroom apartment that sleeps up to 4 people; R$620–R$880 (US$310–US$440/£167–£238) double in an apartment that sleeps up to 7 people. Children under 5 stay free in parent's room, 5 and over R$50 (US$25/£14) extra. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 pools; tour desk; car rental; room service; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchen, minibar, safe.

Pousada Byblos ★★ Tucked away on Orla Bardot, Byblos is in a quiet spot yet just a 5-minute walk from the nightlife and restaurants of the busy Rua das Pedras. The rooms are spacious, have comfortable beds, and offer either an ocean or garden view. The garden rooms are pleasant and have the advantage of being quiet. The best rooms are the oceanview rooms on the top two floors. Both feature balconies. Two of the oceanview rooms have been upgraded to a super-deluxe status and feature a Jacuzzi tub for two. The top floor of the pousada boasts a fabulous rooftop deck with a small swimming pool and a lounge. This pousada is not for people who have difficulty with stairs as access is on narrow spiral stairways.

Rua Alto do Humaitá 14, Praia da Armação, Armação de Búzios, 28925-000 RJ. ✆ **022/2623-1162.** Fax 022/2623-2828. 21 units (showers only). Dec–Mar R$396 (US$198/£107) standard room (garden view), R$506 (US$253/£137) deluxe room (ocean view), R$598 (US$299/£161) super-deluxe double; Apr–Nov R$288 (US$144/£78) standard room (garden view), R$378 (US$189/£102) deluxe room (ocean

view), R$426 (US$213/£115) super-deluxe double. Extra person 30% extra. Children 2 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; pool; tour desk; room service; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, fridge, safe.

MODERATE

Búzios Internacional Apart Hotel *Value Kids* One of the few relatively inexpensive options in town, this modern apart-hotel is located just a few blocks from Rua das Pedras. Units are all self-contained flats equipped with a living room with foldout couch, kitchen, and either one or two bedrooms. All units are pleasantly if simply furnished and come with a balcony and hammock looking out over a central garden. The complex also boasts a swimming pool, sauna, game room, and bar. Prices for two are comparable to the less expensive pousadas, but if there are more than three people (up to a maximum of six) savings can be significant. Discounts for 7-day stays are available.

Estrada da Usina Velha 99, Armação de Búzios, 28980-000 RJ. ✆/fax **022/2537-3876.** www.buziosbeach.com.br. 44 units. High season (mid-Dec to Mar) R$240 (US$120/£65) for 2, R$300 (US$150/£81) for 4. Low season (rest of year excluding holidays) R$200 (US$100/£54) for 2, R$250 (US$125/£67) for 4. AE, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Pool; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchen, minibar, fridge, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Buzin KILO One of the better kilo restaurants, Buzin offers a large buffet of excellent salads, antipasto, and vegetables. The grill serves up a variety of cuts of steak, grilled to your preference. Of course, being right by the sea the restaurant also includes a daily selection of fresh seafood and fish in its offerings.

Rua Manoel Turibe de Farias 273. ✆ **022/2633-7051.** Reservations not accepted. Main courses R$38 (US$19/£10) per kilo. AE, V. Daily noon–midnight.

Estancia Don Juan STEAKHOUSE The Don loves only meat: the menu features *linguiça* (smoked sausage) and numerous exquisite beef cuts such as *picanha,* entrecôte, and *olho de bife.* Side dishes such as broccoli, baked potatoes, or carrots must be ordered separately. Fish flesh is also acceptable: The Don offers a toothsome catch of the day served with hollandaise sauce, capers, or balsamic vinaigrette. You can eat your meat on a lovely flowered patio, or in a multilevel hacienda dripping with atmosphere. Wines by the glass are not offered, but a number of South American reds (R$40–R$120/US$20–US$60/£11–£32) are sold by the bottle. On Tuesday evenings at 9pm, the Estancia features a live tango show.

Rua das Pedras 178. ✆ **022/2623-2169.** Reservations accepted. Main courses R$34–R$52 (US$17–US$26/£9–£14) for 2. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Tues 6pm–midnight; Wed–Sun noon–2am.

Patio Havana ✪✪ INTERNATIONAL By the same owners as the Estancia Don Juan, the Patio Havana offers not only a restaurant but also a cigar shop, bar, lounge, and wine bar. The specialty is seafood. The seafood pasta and grilled lobster in a butter-and-lemon sauce are outstanding. The menu includes many other options including seven different kinds of carpaccios, excellent salads (almost a meal in themselves), and tasty sandwiches. The kitchen also turns out some great steak dishes. Look for the Filet do Pastor, a tender steak stuffed with goat cheese and served with a Dijon mustard sauce. The lounge hosts live music, usually bossa nova, samba, blues, or jazz. Thursday is salsa night. The music with free dance lesson kicks off at 9:30pm.

Rua das Pedras 101. ✆ **022/2623-2169.** R$28–R$52 (US$14–US$26/£7.50–£14). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6pm–midnight (later on Fri–Sat and holidays).

Sawasdee THAI Sawasdee is one of only a handful of Thai restaurants in all of Brazil, so it's the perfect spot to indulge that craving for some satay skewers with spicy peanut sauce or a steaming bowl of Tom Kha Gai, a fragrant coconut soup with lemon grass and coconut. Main courses have a definite seafood focus. Try the prawns and fresh pineapple in Thai curry or the prawns with shitake mushrooms in oyster sauce. Spiciness has been toned down significantly for Brazilian customers so if you like it hot, tell the kitchen to spice it up.

Av. José Bento Ribeiro Dantas 500, Praia da Armação. ✆ **022/2623-4644.** www.sawasdee.com.br. Main courses R$32–R$58 (US$16–US$29/£9–£16). AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Tues 6pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 6pm–1:30am. Closed Wed–Thurs Mar–July.

BÚZIOS AFTER DARK

If you're looking for a night out, **Rua das Pedras** is the place to crawl. This 1,200 meter- (4,000-foot-) long street boasts pubs, bars, discos, and restaurants open on weekends until 5am.

One of the most popular spots is the Mexican bar and disco **Zapata.** To simply sit, sip a drink, and check out the action, the place to be is **Ponto Bar,** which serves Japanese food accompanied by the sounds of long-in-the-tooth rockers such as the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton. If you prefer your entertainment live, there's **Patio Havana** (see above), which features a nightly selection of jazz, blues, and MPB (Musica Popular Brasileira). Should you get bored of the band, you can wander out to the ocean-side patio, light up a cigar, and enjoy the nighttime view. To dance until you drop, there's no better place than disco **Privilege.** But remember, don't bother showing up until 1 or 2am. Two popular Rio bars have set up shop in Búzios recently; both **Devassa** and **Conversa Fiada** serve up good beer and excellent pub food.

2 Petrópolis

Known as *Cidade Imperial* (the Imperial City), Petrópolis is one of Rio de Janeiro's premier mountain resorts, located 720m (2,400 ft.) above sea level. Though only an hour from Rio, its quiet and calm put it light-years from the hectic pace of the city. The lovely tree-lined streets, the palaces, mansions, and museums can be comfortably explored on foot or by horse and buggy, and the mountain air ensures a pleasant climate year-round. Once just a stopover on the gold route between Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, its fine location and cool climate drew the attention of Emperor Dom Pedro II, who in 1843 founded the city of Petrópolis and built his summer palace (now the Imperial Museum) on a piece of land acquired by his father. Construction of the first railway in 1854 opened up easy access to the new city. Many of Brazil's merchant nobility—industrialists, coffee moguls, and politicians—built their summer residences here, turning Petrópolis into the de facto summer capital. Even after the independence of Brazil, in 1889, Petrópolis maintained its prestige. In 1904 the former residence of the Baron of Rio Negro became the official summer residence of the president of the Republic.

Nowadays Petrópolis is a favorite weekend getaway for Cariocas: in the summer to escape the heat and humidity of the city, in the fall and winter for a chance to experience "really cold" weather, wear winter clothes, eat fondue, and sit by the fireplace. The historic part of the city, centered around the Imperial Museum and the Cathedral, contains the majority of the monuments and museums. Tree-lined canals and large squares give the small city a remarkably pleasant atmosphere; the side streets are worth exploring just to have a peek at the many mansions and villas. Particularly nice are Avenida Koeler and Avenida Ipiranga as far as the Casa Petrópolis.

In addition to the Cariocas's noble pursuit of culture and nature, they also flock here to visit the **Rua Teresa,** the best shopping street in Brazil. The area around Petrópolis has many textile factories, and the Rua Teresa has become the prime retail and wholesale outlet for cotton and knitwear at unbelievably low prices.

Petrópolis makes an easy day trip from Rio, but to experience the atmosphere of the city and take in some mountain air, it's better to spend the night. The region has a number of beautiful pousadas and excellent restaurants, and is close to a national park with excellent hiking trails.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE

BY BUS **Unica/Facil** (✆ **021/2263-8792**) offers daily service from Rio to Petrópolis. The trip takes 1 hour and 15 minutes. Buses leave every 15 minutes Monday through Friday between 5:15am and midnight. On Saturday and Sunday buses leave at 5:30am, 6:15am, and 7am and then every 15 minutes until approximately 10pm. Tickets cost R$14 (US$7/£4). Buses depart from the main bus station in Rio, **Novo Rio Rodoviaria,** Av. Francisco Bicalho 1, Santo Cristo (✆ **021/2291-5151**). Buses arrive at the new bus station in Petrópolis on the outskirts of the city. A short taxi ride will take you to all the attractions.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Petrotur has a number of offices around town. The main office is at Av. Koeller 245 Centro, Petrópolis (✆ **024/2243-9300** or 024/2246-9377). Kiosks are located at Rua do Imperador (by the Obelisk) and Casa do Barão de Mauá, both open daily from 9am to 5pm. Ask for the English version of the excellent "Petrópolis Imperial Sightseeing" brochure. It comes with a map and opening hours of each of the attractions. Petrotur also has a free tourism information line—call ✆ **0800/241-516** without a phone card at no charge; the line is open Monday and Tuesday from 9am to 6:30pm, Wednesday through Saturday from 9am to 8pm, Sunday and holidays from 9am to 4pm.

The **Banco do Brasil** branch is located on the Rua do Imperador 940 (corner of Rua Alencar Lima).

EXPLORING PETRÓPOLIS

The historic heart of Petrópolis can easily be explored on foot: the city is fairly flat and extremely safe; even traffic is less hectic than in Rio. Following the directions below will take you to most points of

Tips When Not to Go

The absolute worst day to visit Petrópolis is Monday; most attractions are closed, and shops at the Rua Teresa only open at 2pm. Some attractions are also closed on Tuesday, and many restaurants are closed Monday through Wednesday. The best days to visit are Wednesday through Friday. Weekends can be busy, so book accommodations ahead of time. Avoid holidays as museum lines and traffic can be very bad.

interest. A more detailed description of the most important sights is also included below.

Starting on the corners of Avenida Ipiranga and Tiradentes, the first thing you see is the **Cathedral São Pedro de Alcantara,** a neo-Gothic church named for both the patron saint of the Empire and—not coincidentally—the Emperor Dom Pedro II himself. Construction began in 1876, but the celebratory first Mass wasn't held until 1925. Just inside the main doors to the right is the Imperial Chapel containing the remains of the Emperor Dom Pedro II, the Empress Dona Teresa, their daughter Princess Isabel, and her husband (whose name no one remembers). The princess, who often ruled during her father's many trips abroad, lived in the beautiful mansion immediately across the street, now known as the **Casa da Princesa Isabel.** Continuing along the Avenida Koeler as it follows the tree-lined canal, it's a 5-minute walk to the beautiful **Praça da Liberdade.** The bridge in front of this square offers the best view of the cathedral and the canal. Just behind the Praça da Liberdade is the **Museu Casa de Santos Dumont** (see below). From here follow Avenida Roberto Silveira, then turn right on Rua Alfredo Pachá to the **Palácio de Cristal,** Rua Alfredo Pachá s/n (✆ **024/2247-3721**), open Tuesday through Sunday from 9am to 6:30pm. Commissioned by Princesa Isabel and built in France, the structure was inaugurated in 1894 as an agricultural exhibition hall. Nowadays, the palace is used for cultural events and exhibits (see "Special Events," below). Crossing the bridge to Avenida Piabanha, you come to the **Casa Barão de Mauá,** Praça da Confluencia s/n (✆ **024/2242-4300**). Built in 1854 in neoclassical style by the industrial baron who constructed Brazil's first railway, the house is open for guided visits Monday though Saturday from 9am to 6pm and on Sunday and holidays from 9am to 4pm. Only a small number of personal belongings have been preserved (the high-flying baron was forced to sell off his possessions just prior to his death to pay off his many debts). The columns surrounding the winter garden are solid iron, made by the baron himself. Admission is free.

The Petrotur information kiosk inside the building has a great brochure in English that features a map plus a listing of all the attractions with their opening hours.

Continue by taking Rua 13 de Maio—right across the street from the Casa Barão de Mauá—toward the cathedral and then turning left on Avenida Ipiranga at the intersection just before the cathedral. Along this street are a number of interesting buildings as well as some gorgeous mansions and villas. Standing on the right side of the street at no. 346 is the 1816 **Igreja Luterana,** the oldest church in

Petrópolis (open for visitation only during Sun morning service at 10am). On the left side of the street at no. 405 is the **Casa Rui Barbosa,** the summer residence of the liberal journalist, politician, and positivist who helped found the First Republic. A bit farther along the Avenida Ipiranga at no. 716 is the lovely **Casa de Petrópolis,** a museum, cultural center, restaurant, and garden (see below). From here it's a simple matter to retrace your steps to the cathedral.

Casa de Petrópolis ★★ Guided tours of this beautifully preserved house will take you through numerous salons lavishly decorated with satin curtains and wallpaper, gold-leaf chandeliers, and ornate and beautiful furniture. The banquet room is a marvel of jacaranda wood—the room's generous palette of colors is the result of judicious use of variously colored jacaranda subspecies. The rest of the house is used for concerts and exhibits. Weekly concerts take place on Saturday night at 8pm; tickets cost R$15 (US$7.50/£4). The lovely garden is also well worth a look. Allow 1 hour.

Rua Ipiranga 716. ✆ **024/2242-0653.** Admission R$5 (US$2.50/£1.35). Thurs–Mon noon–7pm.

Museu Casa de Santos Dumont ★ Who invented and flew the first airplane? Santos Dumont! Brazil's most famous aviator was the first in the world in 1906 to take off and land under his own power (unlike the Wright brothers, who used a catapult for takeoff on their first flight at Kitty Hawk). On display in this house are a number of bits of personal memorabilia: the medallions he earned for his many flight projects; his photos, books, and letters; and the Brazilian flag he carried with him on every flight. In the bathroom there's another Dumont original: the first hot shower in Brazil, heated by alcohol. Expect to spend 20 minutes. Helpful guides happily provide information in English.

Rua do Encanto 22. ✆ **024/2247-3158.** Admission R$5 (US$2.50/£1.35). Tues–Sun 9:30am–5pm.

Museu Imperial ★★ Built by Dom Pedro II in 1845 as his summer palace, the much-loved Museu Imperial is now Petrópolis's premier museum. (On Sun and holidays the line can be fierce.) The self-guided visits take you through numerous ground-floor salons decorated with period furniture, household items, and lovely paintings and drawings depicting life and landscapes of 19th-century Rio. Best of all is Brazil's equivalent of the crown jewels: Dom Pedro II's crown, weighing almost 4 pounds, encrusted with 639 diamonds and 77 pearls. Upstairs, visitors can see the bedrooms, including lovely

baby cribs made out of jacaranda wood and decorated with bronze and ivory—fit for a pair of princesses. In the garden, the palace's coach house has a beautiful collection of 18th- and 19th-century carriages. The highlight is the royal carriage, painted in gold and pulled by eight horses. Expect to spend 1½ hours.

Rua da Imperatriz 220. ✆ **024/2237-8000.** Free admission to gardens; museum R$8 (US$4/£2) adults, R$4 (US$2/£1) children 7–14, free for children under 7. Tues–Sun 11am–5pm.

Palácio Rio Negro Built by the coffee mogul Barão de Rio Negro in 1890, the palace has served as the summer residence of Brazilian presidents from 1903 onward. The rest of the year it functions as a cultural center. Most of the furniture inside is Portuguese baroque—dark, heavy, and beautifully carved. The hardwood floors are particularly ornate. Each room has a different pattern; the dining room floor is done in a coffee-bean pattern.

Av. Koeller 255. ✆ **024/2246-9380.** Admission R$4 (US$2/£1]). Wed–Sun 9:30am–5pm.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

HIKING Petrópolis has great hiking in the hills surrounding the town. For information on day hikes contact **Petrotur** (✆ **0800/241-516** or 024/2243-9300). **Açu Expedições** (✆ **024/2221-3832;** www.cabanasacu.com.br) offers guided day hikes and overnight trips as well as rafting, rappelling, horseback riding, and rock climbing. **Rio Hiking** (✆ **021/2552-9204** or 021/9721-0594) also organizes a variety of hiking trips in the Petrópolis region, with transportation to and from Rio included. A day trip can combine a short hike with some sightseeing of Petrópolis (R$180/US$90/£49 per person) or you can opt for a 2-day hiking trip in the national park of Serra dos Orgãos close to Petrópolis (R$440/US$220/£119).

HORSEBACK RIDING Contact the **Açu Expedições** for horseback riding (✆ **024/2221-3832**). See more details on Açu Expedições above. They can recommend and customize a trek for you according to your skills and interests.

SPECIAL EVENTS

To honor the German immigrants who played an important role in the early days of Petrópolis, the city holds **Bauernfest,** an annual festival celebrating German music, culture, and food. It is held yearly on the last weekend of June and the first week of July. Contact Petrotur for more information (✆ **0800/241-516**).

Making the most of Petrópolis's reputation as a winter destination, the **Festival de Inverno (Winter Music Festival)** takes place in the last 2 weeks of July at the Palácio de Crystal, Palácio Rio Negro, Centro Cultural Raul de Leoni, and Praça da Liberdade. For information contact ✆ **0800/241-516** or 024/2231-3011.

WHERE TO STAY

Overnight visitors to Petrópolis can choose to stay at hotels or pousadas in the historic part of town, or head farther out and find a nice hotel in the hills and valleys close to town. The advantage of staying downtown is that all the attractions are easily accessible on foot. If you choose to stay farther out it's always a good idea to contact your pousada for instructions on how to get there; some can arrange for pickup or send a taxi. Unlike many other Brazilian destinations, Petrópolis does not have a pronounced low or high season.

Casablanca Hotel Imperial ★ *Value* More central would be almost impossible. Located next door to the Museu Imperial on one of Petrópolis's fine canals, Casablanca is within easy walking distance of all the city's historic sights. The hotel consists of the original mansion and a modern annex. The nicest rooms are the deluxe ones on the second floor of the original building. These have sky-high ceilings, air-conditioning, bathtubs, and antique dark wood furniture. On the same floor there is also a lovely reading lounge with a fireplace looking out over the canal. The standard rooms with showers only—in the annex and on the ground floor of the main house—are pleasant but lack the same level of character. The only drawback to this hotel's central location is the neighboring school; it gets very noisy during recess.

Rua da Imperatriz 286, Petrópolis, 25610-320 RJ. ✆ **024/2242-6662.** www.casablancahotel.com.br. 43 units (7 with bathtub, 36 with shower only). R$180 (US$90/£49) standard double; R$220 (US$110/£59) deluxe double. Extra bed R$60 (US$30/£16). Children 6 and older R$35 (US$18/£9.50). AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Pool; sauna; game room; limited room service; laundry service. *In room:* A/C (in *luxo* rooms only—standard rooms w/fans), TV, minibar.

Pousada Monte Imperial Koeller This cute inn is located on one of the prettiest boulevards in Petrópolis, amid many of the historic buildings. Some of the rooms have a balcony and offer pleasant views of the gardens. Other rooms look out over the historic Casa da Princesa Isabel mansion next door. All rooms are nicely decorated and feature comfortable beds and Egyptian cotton sheets. Breakfast is included.

Av. Koeller 99, Petrópolis, RJ. ✆ **024/2243-4330.** www.pousadamonteimperial.com.br. 11 units (showers only). R$195–R$230 (US$97–US$115/£53–£62) Extra person R$60 (US$30/£16). Children's rate negotiable. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Laundry service. *In room:* TV, minibar, fridge.

Solar do Imperio ★★★ Fit for a king, or a princess to be more precise, the Solar do Imperio is a lovingly restored neoclassical palace built in 1875, and home for a time to Brazil's Princess Isabela. Now, commoners can experience the regal elegance of this villa in the heart of Petrópolis. Upgraded, as much as possible, to modern standards, the rooms boast air-conditioning and heat, and king-size beds with down comforters and pillows. Guests can choose between the *Real* suite or the Imperial suite, the basic difference being the size of the room; *Real* suites are much more spacious and have soaring high ceilings. Amenities, however, are the same in all rooms. The hotel also boasts a beautifully restored reading room, and an elegant veranda and garden—a royal experience indeed.

Av. Koeler 376, Petrópolis, RJ. ✆ **024/2103-3000.** www.solardoimperio.com.br. 16 units. R$390–R$590 (US$195–US$245/£105–£159) suite Imperial double; R$490–R$625 (US$245–US$312/£132–£169) suite Real double. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; pool; sauna; game room; limited room service; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Petrópolis offers a range of dining opportunities, from schnitzel to sushi to *churrasco.* Check opening times carefully, though, as a number of restaurants are closed Monday through Wednesday or Monday through Thursday.

Churrascaria Majoricá ★ CHURRASCO A traditional-looking *churrascaria* with wood panels and booths, Majoricá is a local favorite when it comes to a good steak. Make your choice: T-bone, *picanha,* entrecôte, half and half (tenderloin pork and beef), or grilled chicken. Just as delicious is the shrimp skewer with roasted vegetables and the prawn stroganoff. Most dishes serve two people. Small steak orders are also available; add a side plate or two and you have a perfect meal for one.

Rua do Imperador 754. ✆ **024/2242-2498.** R$18–R$34 (US$9–US$17/£5–£9) steak; R$26–R$48 (US$13–US$24/£7–£13) seafood dishes. AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11am–11pm.

Luigi ★ ITALIAN Lovers of simple Italian food will enjoy Luigi's. The large menu lists pasta and sauce separately, allowing guests to mix and match. There is also a variety of stuffed pastas such as cannelloni, ravioli, and lasagna. For a lighter meal, creamy onion or

broccoli soup and the option of the salad buffet is perfect. This large buffet offers salad in the broad definition of the word, including cold cuts, cheeses, quiches, and sliced roast beef. In the evenings the restaurant serves excellent pizzas.

Praça Rui Barbosa 185, Centro. ✆ **024/2246-0279.** www.massasluigi.com.br. R$16–R$38 (US$8–US$19/£4–£10). AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11am–midnight; Fri–Sat 11am–1am.

Petit Palais Tea Room ★★ TEA/CAFE Tucked away in the corner of the gardens surrounding the museum, this lovely tearoom is the perfect place for lunch. Head toward the coach house and follow the path slightly downhill to the left. Full tea service is available, including cakes, pies, croissants, madeleines, toast, jam, cold cuts, and pâté. For a smaller lunch or snack the restaurant also serves a variety of quiches, omelets, soups, and sandwiches, as well as pastas such as the Gorgonzola with nuts or the shrimp with fresh tomato sauce.

Rua da Imperatriz 220. ✆ **024/2244-7912.** Main lunch courses R$14–R$26 (US$7–US$13/£4–£7); full tea R$39 (US$20/£11). No credit cards. Tues–Wed noon–7pm; Thurs noon–8pm; Fri–Sat noon–midnight; Sun noon–7pm.

3 Paraty ★★★

The main attraction of Paraty is its historic core, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with beautifully preserved colonial architecture. Paraty first grew in importance in the 1800s when it became the main shipping port for the gold from the mines of Minas Gerais. The gold was transported down windy trails and cobblestone roads from Ouro Prêto to the coast, where it was loaded on ships sailing for Portugal. Once gold became scarce, Paraty switched to coffee, but with the abolishment of slavery in 1888, that too dried up and Paraty faded to near oblivion; the population fell from 16,000 in its glory days to 600 in the early 1900s. From a heritage perspective it was the city's saving grace.

In 1966 the historic colonial center of Paraty was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. To preserve its unique premodern character, cars were banished from the old colonial core. In the heart of the city it's pedestrians only. Radical as that may sound, it actually works rather well. Boat tours of the surrounding islands leave from the dock in the city center. Day trips into the surrounding hills include transportation.

The region surrounding the city adds much to Paraty's quiet beauty. The hills are still mostly covered in lush green coastal rainforest, and the waters around Paraty, dotted with 65 islands, are

tropical turquoise, warm and crystal clear, perfect for snorkeling, swimming, or scuba diving.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION

The official **Paraty Tourist Information,** Av. Roberto Silveira 1 on the corner of Rua Domingos Gonçalves de Abreu (✆ **024/3371-1222;** www.paraty.com.br), is open daily 9am to 9pm. **Paraty Tours** operates an information kiosk downtown, just a block down from the historic center at Av. Roberto da Silveira 11 (✆ **024/3371-1222;** www.paratytours.com.br). They provide general tourist information as well as suggestions on hotels, tours, and excursions.

GETTING THERE

BY BUS Paraty is easily accessible by bus. From Rio de Janeiro, there are two bus companies with daily departures: **Costa Verde** (✆ **024/3371-1177**) or **Normandy** (✆ **024/3371-1277**); both depart from the main bus station in Rio (Novo Rio). The trip takes approximately 4 hours and costs R$36 (US$19/£10). From São Paulo five buses depart daily from Tietê station with **Reunidas** (✆ **024/3371-1196**). The trip takes about 6 hours and costs R$28 (US$14/£7.50).

BY PRIVATE TRANSFER **Paraty Tours** (✆ **024/3371-1222;** www.paratytours.com.br) offers private transfers with set times for a minimum of 2 people at 8:30am, 12:30pm, and 5pm. Airport pickups anytime between 8:30am and 5pm. Rates per person R$125 (US$63/£34). For three people or more you can set your own pickup time.

GETTING AROUND

ON FOOT The historic center of Paraty is perfect for exploring on foot. The city center is closed to cars (parking is on the outskirts), making walking a traffic-free dream. Wear comfortable shoes as the big cobblestones make for a bumpy stroll.

BY TAXI Taxis in Paraty can be hailed outside of the car-free historic city center, or call ✆ **024/9999-9075.**

BY RENTAL CAR To explore the surrounding area on your own, you can rent a car from **Atrium,** Rua do Comércio 26 (✆ **024/3371-1295**).

FAST FACTS: PARATY

BANKING **Banco do Brasil,** Av. Roberto Silveira s/n (✆ **024/3371-1379**), is open Monday through Friday 10am to 3pm. ATMs are open 24 hours.

INTERNET ACCESS **Paraty Web Internet Access** is located inside the Quero Mais Restaurant, Rua Marechal Deodoro 243 (✆ **024/3371-7375**). Connection cost is R$4 (US$2/£1.35) per hour.

EXPLORING PARATY

EXPLORING THE HISTORIC CENTER

Start your exploration of Paraty at the main pier at the bottom of **Rua da Lapa.** Fishing boats come and go, as well as frequent schooner excursions. Turn and face the city and you will see the postcard-perfect vista of Paraty: the **Santa Rita** church framed by a background of lush green hills. The church was built by freed slaves in 1722 and despite its plain exterior, displays some fine rococo artwork. The church also houses the small **Museum of Sacred Art** (Wed–Sun 10am–noon and 2–5pm; R$4/US$2/£1.35). It's worth a quick peek, though it can't compare to some of the fine art on display in Ouro Prêto or Mariana. The building just to the left of the church was once the town jail; now it's home to the city library and historical institute. Paraty's biggest and most ornate church, the **Igreja da Matriz,** stands on the Praça da Matriz, close to the River Perequê-Açu. What started with a small chapel in 1646 became a bigger church in 1712 and was finally replaced with the current large neoclassical building, completed in 1873. The **Casa da Cultura** (Rua Dona Geralda) was originally built in 1754 as a private residence and warehouse. Later it housed the town's public school. In the 1990s, the city restored it to serve as a cultural center and exhibit space.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

BOATING Just beyond the muddy Paraty waterfront, the coast is dotted with more than 60 islands, many lush and green, surrounded by turquoise water. It shouldn't be surprising, then, that schooner trips are extremely popular. The pier in the city center is the main departure point. Boats leave daily, weather permitting, and take you on a 5- to 6-hour tour, stopping several times for a swim or snorkel and a lunch break. **Paraty Tours** (✆ **024/3371-1327**) and **Saveiro Porto Seguro** (✆ **024/3371-1254**) are just two of several companies that have daily departures at 11am (as well as 10am and noon in high season); the cost is R$25 (US$13/£7) for adults, free for children under 5, R$15 (US$7.50/£4) for 5- to 10-year-olds. To explore

the bay at a more leisurely pace, Paraty tours offers a kayak tour. The 6-hour paddle provides plenty of opportunity for checking out some of the islands and beaches. Cost is R$60 (US$30/£16) per person, including a guide and all the equipment (minimum of two people).

BIKING A mountain bike is the perfect way to reach some of the waterfalls in the surrounding hills or some of the beaches just a 10km (6½-mile) ride out of town. **Paraty Tours,** Av. Roberto da Silveira 11 (✆ **024/3371-1327**), rents bikes by the hour for R$6 (US$3/£1.60) or by the day for R$30 (US$15/£8). Maps are provided.

DIVING The islands around Paraty have some decent diving and cater to a variety of levels. Most operators take you to the many islands around Angra dos Reis (up the coast from Paraty). Two dive companies in town are **Alpha Dive,** Praça da Bandeira 1, centro histórico (✆ **024/3371-2798**), and **Paraty Tours,** Av. Roberto da Silveira 11 (✆ **024/3371-1327**). Both offer a full range of services, including cylinder refill and courses, and an introductory dive if you do not have a license. For a certified diver, a two-dive excursion costs approximately R$150 (US$75/£41). This rate includes all the equipment such as a regulator, BC (buoyancy control), wet suit, and mask/fins/snorkel.

HIKING In the surrounding hills one can still find stretches of the old wagon trail that was used to bring the gold from Ouro Prêto down to the coast. Parts of the old cobblestone trail have been restored and are accessible to hikers. **Caminho do Ouro (Gold Trail)** offers an easy trek along this historic route. The full-day tour leaves Thursday through Sunday at 10am and includes a guide and transportation from Paraty. R$35 (US$18/£9.50) per person, children 4 to 10 half price. Their booking office is located inside the Teatro Espaço, Rua Dona Geralda 327 (✆ **024/3371-1575;** www.caminhodoouro.com.br). If you want a more serious hike, consider a 2- or 3-day trip. **Rio Hiking** (✆ **021/9874-3698;** www.riohiking.com.br) offers excellent hiking trips along the beaches and through the coastal rainforest on the peninsula just south of Paraty, Paraty-Mirim. Transportation from Rio de Janeiro and rustic accommodations are included (2-day trip R$440/US$220/£119 per person, and 3-day trip R$660/US$330/£178). **Paraty Tours,** Av. Roberto da Silveira 11 (✆ **024/3371-1327**), offers a number of short guided hikes to the isolated beaches at Trinidade and Praia do Sono (R$35–R$45/US$18–US$23/£9.50–£12 per person). Transportation is by jeep and includes several stops.

HORSEBACK RIDING **Paraty Tours,** Av. Roberto da Silveira 11 (✆ **024/3371-1327**), can organize horseback rides in the local

hills. Groups can be as small as two people with a minimum of a 3-hour ride (R$90/US$45/£24 per person).

WHERE TO STAY

Paraty's historic center is jampacked with pousadas, similar to North American B&Bs. Of course, retrofitting modern accommodations into 18th-century buildings requires some adaptations. Don't expect fancy plumbing or high-speed Internet. Stairways are narrow and steep and there is no parking, as all cars have to remain outside the historic core. What you do get are charming bed-and-breakfasts in beautiful heritage buildings. Most of the pousadas really play up the history and are thus decorated with lovely antique furniture, comfortable lounges, and pleasant inner courtyards. Paraty is surprisingly affordable, even more so if you travel during the week instead of the weekend.

EXPENSIVE

Pousada Art Urquijo ✪✪✪ Probably Paraty's most unusual pousada, Art Urquijo is a true labor of love by the owner, artist Luz Urquijo. Her bold and colorful artwork is prominently displayed throughout the pousada. Guests are greeted with classical music and asked to take their shoes off and help themselves to comfortable slippers. Luz has paid a lot of attention to detail and each of her six rooms is unique. Our favorite is Sofia; this room looks out over the rooftops toward the ocean and has a small deck. Probably the most unique room is Xul; as the ceilings are a bit low, Luz has used a Japanese bed (low on the floor) and mats and pillows to decorate. All rooms come with a very tiny private bathroom. Despite the absence of air-conditioning, the building is airy and cool. This pousada is not for people who have a difficulty with stairs; the higher floors can only be reached via a narrow winding staircase.

Rua Dona Geralda 79, Paraty, 23970-000 RJ. ✆/fax **024/3371-1362.** www.urquijo.com.br. 6 units (showers only). High season R$310–R$370 (US$155–US$185/£84–£100); low season R$290–R$330 (US$145–US$165/£78–£89). Rooms accommodate doubles only. V. No children under 12. **Amenities:** Bar; small pool; laundry service. *In room:* TV, minibar, no phone.

MODERATE

Pousada da Marquesa ✪ A lovely sprawling colonial mansion, Pousada da Marquesa offers affordable accommodations with some great amenities. The pousada actually consists of two buildings, the original main building and an annex along the side with its apartments and a large veranda overlooking the garden and swimming

pool. These rooms are on ground level and perfect for those who don't want to climb the steep and narrow stairs. All rooms are simply and nicely furnished and the common rooms have beautiful antiques. A swimming pool and garden offer a perfect refuge on hot summer days.

Rua Dona Geralda 99, Paraty, 23970-000 RJ. ✆ **024/3371-1263.** Fax 024/3371-1299. www.pousadamarquesa.com.br. 28 units (showers only). Dec–Mar R$300–R$340 (US$150–US$170/£81–£92) double; Apr–Nov R$190 (US$95/£51) double. Extra person 30%–50% extra. Children 6 and under stay free in parent's room. MC, V. Free street parking. **Amenities:** Bar; pool; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, safe.

Pousada Porto Imperial One of the largest pousadas in the city center, Porto Imperial still feels like a small inn, despite its 51 rooms. The decorations throughout the pousada are quite impressive, blending antique furniture with modern folk art and tropical colors. In contrast, the rooms are very simply decorated with plain wooden furniture and bedding. The inner courtyard hides a lovely garden and swimming pool as well as a sauna.

Rua Tenente Francisco Antônio s/n (across from the Matriz church), Paraty, 23970-000 RJ. ✆ **024/3371-2323.** Fax 024/3371-2111. www.portotel.com.br. 51 units. Low season R$200 (US$100/£54) standard double; R$240 (US$120/£65) superior double. High season R$320 (US$160/£86) standard double; R$425 (US$213/£115) superior double. Children 2–12 R$40 (US$20/£11). AE, DC, MC, V. Free street parking. **Amenities:** Pool; sauna; limited room service; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Arco da Velha COFFEE SHOP For your morning shot of caffeine or afternoon aperitif (or vice versa, depending on your preference), try this lovely coffee/antiques/cigar shop. It's the perfect place to sit back and have a drink or a bite and rest your legs from wandering the cobblestones. Besides a delicious sweets menu, Arco da Velha also has an extensive cigar and whiskey collection, and while you're there you can browse the lovely store.

Rua Samuel Costa 176. ✆ **024/3371-2546.** Everything under R$15 (US$7.50/£4), except for the cigars. No credit cards. Daily 10am–8pm.

Banana da Terra BRAZILIAN This beautiful little restaurant on one of Paraty's side streets offers exotic combinations of seafood and tropical ingredients. *Ponta Negra* is a fabulous fish dish served in a coconut sauce with shrimp. Another dish stars the lowly squid dolled up with a banana-and-cheese stuffing and served in coconut milk. Another seafood favorite is the risotto with squid, crab, and prawns

Moments Cachaça Festival

The region around Paraty is very well known for its cachaça (also known as *pinga*), the Brazilian booze made from sugar cane. There are several distilleries nearby, and each year, on the third weekend of August, the city celebrates the Festival da Pinga. Events include live music and lots and lots of tastings. ***Tip:*** If you miss the festival, make sure to stop at the **Emporio da Cachaça,** a specialty store with over 300 types of cachaça from all over Brazil. Rua dr. Samuel Costa 22 (✆ **024/3371-6329**).

spiced with ginger and chutney. Desserts include banana sweets or baked banana.

Rua Dr. Samuel Costa 198. ✆ **024/3371-1725.** Main courses R$21–R$48 (US$11–US$24/£5.50–£12) for 2. AE, DC, MC. Wed–Mon noon–4pm and 7pm–midnight. In the off season closed for lunch on Mon and Wed–Thurs.

Kontiki SEAFOOD If you thought only millionaires got to go for lunch on a private island, you're missing out. Kontiki restaurant is only a 10-minute boat ride from Paraty, on the tiny Ilha Duas Irmãs (two sisters island). In the daytime, the restaurant operates a shuttle service from the pier in Paraty. Just ask for the Kontiki transfer. In the evenings the restaurant will only open with a minimum of 10 people (in total) so call in your reservations and they will confirm if there's enough to open the restaurant. The menu is Mediterranean seafood, including lots of fresh prawns, crab, and fish. Pastas with seafood are also a good option as well as the authentic Spanish *paella,* a saffron rice dish with meat and seafood. The restaurant's two large verandas look out over the bay and the mainland. In the daytime showers are available in case you want to rinse off after a swim.

Ilha Duas Irmãs. ✆ **022/3371-1666.** Main courses R$34–R$68 (US$17–US$34/£9–£18). MC, V. Low season Mon–Tues and Fri–Sun 10am–5:30pm; summer daily 10am–5:30pm.

Restaurante Refúgio BRAZILIAN A refuge indeed, Restaurante Refúgio is tucked away from the busy streets and offers a large patio overlooking the harbor of Paraty. The specialty here is seafood. As an appetizer, try the *camarão casadinho* (a large deep-fried prawn stuffed with a spicy farofa and dried shrimp filling), a regional specialty found only in Paraty. For a main course, try the fish or seafood moquecas (stews with coconut milk and palm oil).

Festivals Galore

Paraty is trying to establish itself as the Festival Town (see above for the Cachaça Festival). So far the town has very successfully started up a writer's festival, flippantly referred to as the FLIP (Festa Literária Internacional de Paraty). This event takes place in early July and includes numerous well-known foreign authors. For more details on upcoming FLIPs see www.flip.org.br. Book early if you plan to attend the FLIP! This event has quickly become the toast of the town and it's even outselling New Year's or carnival! In the third week of October, the city hosts a small but well attended International Film Festival. Contact the tourist information office (✆ **024/3371-1222**) for details.

Praça do Porto 1, on the waterfront. ✆ **022/3371-2447.** Main courses R$25–R$38 (US$11–US$16/£5.50–£8). DC, MC, V. Daily noon–11pm.

PARATY AFTER DARK

Pararty is not a wild party town (that's Búzios). The crowd's a bit older, the nightlife more laid-back. Enjoy some live music, have some drinks, and chat with the other folks who are quite likely visiting as well.

One of the more popular live-music venues is the **Café Paraty,** Rua do Comércio 253 (✆ **024/3371-1464**). It bills itself as a restaurant—and the food is pretty decent—but the place really gets hopping later in the evening, after 10pm or so. The restaurant has a small stage, and the excellent bands usually play covers of popular Brazilian music. Daily 9am to midnight.

Another popular spot in the evenings is **Porto da Pinga,** Rua da Matriz 12 (✆ **024/9907-4370).** This bistro specializes in local cachaças. Live music nightly; a great spot to go and try some of the regionally produced firewater. Should you find one you particularly like, you can pick up some extra to take home from their on-site *cachaçaria*. Another restaurant doing double duty as a bar is the **Margarida Café,** Praça do Chafariz (✆ **024/3371-2441**). Both the restaurant and bar are very nice and on weekends there is always live Brazilian music, a perfect spot to enjoy a nightcap after dinner.

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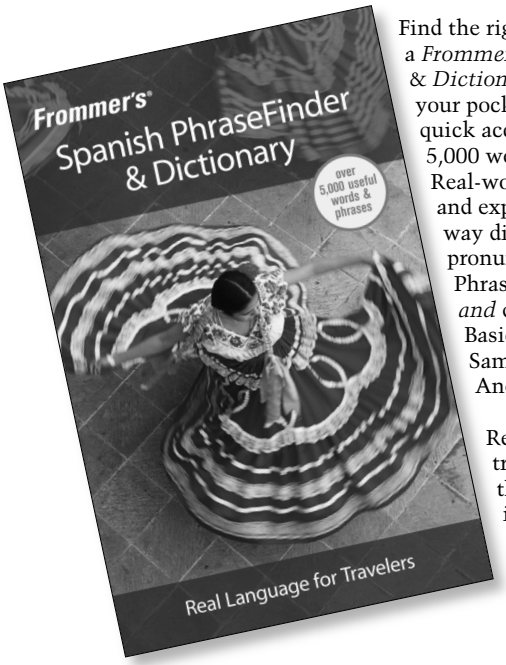

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There's a parking lot where my ocean view should be.

À la place de la vue sur l'océan, me voilà avec une vue sur un parking.

Anstatt Meerblick habe ich Sicht auf einen Parkplatz.

Al posto della vista sull'oceano c'è un parcheggio.

No tengo vista al mar porque hay un parque de estacionamiento.

Há um parque de estacionamento onde deveria estar a minha vista do oceano

Ett parkeringsområde har byggts på den plats där min utsikt över oceanen borde vara.

Er ligt een parkeerterrein waar mijn zee-uitzicht zou moeten zijn.

هنالك موقف للسيارات مكان ما وجب ان يكون المنظر الخلاب المطل على المحيط .

眼前に広がる紺碧の海・・・じゃない。窓の外は駐車場

停车场的位置应该是我的海景所在。

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